THE ROLE OF PERIODICALS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST, 1850-1910

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PREFACE

This study is basically an examination of the evidence relating to a statement made by Disciples historian W. T. Moore to the effect that Disciples editors have served in a practical way as bishops of the denomination, exercising power and authority in the absence of any extra-congregational ecclesiastical structure.

The development of the Disciples in the period from 1850 to 1910 was influenced by many factors but the intense individualism and the accompanying suspicion of formally structured authority, which the Disciples shared with many other denominations, created an opportunity for Disciples editors, as individuals rather than as parts of an ecclesiastical organization, to exercise an extreme degree of power.

This study is not intended to imply that the Disciples were unique, either in their individualism or in their susceptibility to editorial influence, but simply that within the denomination this influence was decisive.

I am deeply grateful to Dr. Herman A. Norton, Professor of Church History, the Divinity School, Vanderbilt University, for primary guidance in this research; to Dr. Claude Spencer, Curator Emeritus, and the Disciples of Christ Historical Society, Nashville, for making available an abundance of source material; and to many others who have assisted along the way.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Development and Use of the Periodical Among the Disciples

The Disciples of Christ, the religious body resulting primarily from the efforts of Barton W. Stone and Alexander Campbell, originated on the American frontier in the first decades of the nineteenth century, and the environment of the frontier profoundly affected its development. One of the most prominent aspects of the frontier mentality was a profound aversion to the established authority of the more settled customs, traditions, and institutions of the eastern seaboard. The average frontiersman of the early 1800's felt, with some justification, that he did not have a proportionate voice in the government and that the political situation was weighted in favor of the older settlements of the East. Finding himself in a new country, facing new problems without precedent to guide him, the pioneer of the frontier survived by his skill in innovation. His restless spirit chafed under the burden of old forms of authority, political, social, and religious, which were often applied by those ignorant of frontier conditions and far removed from the local situation. Indeed, the lack of adequate means of transportation and communication made Richmond farther from Lexington in 1800 than Asia is from America today.

Until the balance of power caught up with the moving population, and the states of the frontier--Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Tennessee--were formed, distance from the seats of government often made it necessary for the settlers to improvise, and once they had their own state governments, the westerners were still more apt to act according to pragmatic expediency than by the authority of past traditions.

The early 1800's saw the western territory occupied by new people: new country, new governments, a new society, full of ferment and change. This had its effect on religion. The church has never existed in a vacuum, but has been shaped and is shaped by the society of which it is a part. On the frontier the environment exerted its influence on the older forms of the American churches.

The influence of the frontier is evident in the development of the Disciples of Christ, and other denominations as well. It is all the more evident in the Disciples movement since it, at the point of its origin, consciously attempted to break with the immediate past and to return to what they were pleased to call the "primitive simplicity" of the early church. The ideals of this primitive simplicity turned out to be remarkably reflective of the salient characteristics of the American frontier. As has been noted, one of the characteristics of the frontier was a lack of regard for, and often positive suspicion of, authority. The older church groups met with difficulty in imposing traditional forms on the frontier churches. In this environment, the Disciples arose and experienced rapid growth. It was not only the first truly indigenous American church, but it was also a truly indigenous frontier denomination, arising in Kentucky, western Pennsylvania, and rapidly finding its growth in Indiana, Ohio, Illinois, and Tennessee. It is in these areas of the old Middle Frontier that its principal strength remains.

These circumstances provide the key to understanding the Disciples' attitude toward authority in the church. The Disciples were marked by an intense suspicion of ecclesiastical organization and would admit none beyond the local church--an independent, autonomous unit. This extreme form of congregationalism was accompanied by an aversion to any form of tradition that could not be found in the Bible. "No creed but Christ" was the rallying cry and the average Disciple would admit no authority of any kind except that of the Bible itself. Even commentaries on the Bible were suspect, since the Bible was considered so clear it could be sufficiently understood by the common man with no external aid. The Bible was to be read as any other book and its clear meaning was to serve as a guide for personal conduct and as a constitution for the church.

The Disciples felt that any two people reading the same passage of the Bible would come up with the same understanding of it, provided their minds were uncluttered by traditions and man-made theologies. Every man was allowed full freedom of opinion on non-essentials, but it was taken for granted that there would be agreement on the grand essentials of the Christian faith. This gave rise to the adoption of the old formula, "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; and in all things, charity." The definition of what is essential and its separation from what is non-essential was another matter. In this deep water, the Disciples often foundered, argued, divided, and debated.

This individualistic approach to the matter of authority left a vacuum in the structure of the Disciples of Christ as a whole. Lacking any kind of ecclesiastical organization with authority, or the authority of a traditional theology or creed, the Disciples were in danger of fragmenting into as many different points of view as there were individuals, and individual congregations. While all possessed the same Bible, there was, at least in theory, no one to say this or that belief or action should be normative. In actual practice, this did not happen, since a few individual leaders among the Disciples enjoyed an immense prestige which prevented a complete vacuum in the area of power structure and authority. Thomas and Alexander Campbell, Barton W. Stone, and Walter Scott, by virtue of their positions as founding fathers, had an unstructured authority which came as a result of their personal leadership. Alexander Campbell, in particular, presented his views forcibly and clearly to a widely disseminated audience, and the widespread acceptance of these views gave Campbell an almost unrivaled personal authority among the early Disciples.

Lack of an authoritative ecclesiastical superstructure or forms for co-operative endeavors made leadership among the Disciples intensely personal. The individualistic emphasis of the frontier added its weight in this direction. Campbell early discovered that the press was essential for any widespread dissemination of his teaching--indeed, the religious press was the only avenue open to more than local fame. In the absence of radio, television, large concentrations of population, and easy and efficient modes of travel, personal contact and the press provided the only two ways of becoming well-known.

Campbell's periodical, the Christian Baptist, lifted him from comparative obscurity to the position of the leadership of a movement, and the lesson was not lost on him or on other Disciples preachers. The religious press, in periodical form, became the keystone in the propagation of the Disciples message. Disciples, as individuals, were quick to grasp the significance of the power of the press, and they developed the religious periodical to a fine point. Disciples cannot claim to have been first to use this form of literature, or the only denomination but few other church groups depended upon it as much, and the structure of the Disciples was such that it became an instrument of great strength in the development of personal authority.

Individual Disciples produced over one hundred periodicals between 1820 and 1860.[1] Almost every preacher who could scrape together the means to produce at least one issue tried his hand as an editor. These men were actuated by an intense desire to spread the gospel as they understood it. Physically limited in the audiences to which they could preach personally, the Disciples preachers sought a wider hearing through the press. One could scarcely consider himself a full-fledged preacher until he had attempted at least one religious periodical. Several factors stimulated this plethoric production: printing was still in the handcraft stage on the frontier in the early 1800's and a small shop could be conducted effectively by one man, with a relatively small capital investment (an interesting insight into this is the description of a typical newspaper office of the nineteenth century);[2] and the leadership and acceptance of one's personal views among the Disciples was limited by the number of people one could reach and persuade with his message. Commenting on the secular press of that era, Dr. Thomas Clark wrote: "Perhaps no other calling offered so much prestige and community honor in so short a time as did editorship."[3]

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[1] See Claude E. Spencer, Periodicals of the Disciples of Christ and Related Religious Groups (Canton, Missouri: Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1943). Hereafter referred to as Periodicals of the Disciples.

An example of the relative ease with which a periodical could be started is given by William Cooper Howells, who started writing and publishing the Gleaner, a sixteen-page monthly, in the autumn of 1828.[4] Howells' equipment was one hundred pounds of bourgeois (eight-point) type, a few home-made stands, and a wooden press. This was barely enough type to cover the requirements of his sixteen small pages, and one issue of the paper would exhaust his total supply of type. It would be printed in two press runs on a single large sheet, eight pages on one side and eight on the other. Howells did his own typesetting and distributing, his own presswork, and his own folding and stitching. His paper was a one-man affair and required a small capital investment.

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[2] Thomas D. Clark, The Southern Country Editor (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1948), p. 35. "Just as no extensive amount of education was necessary in the editing of a weekly, so also a limited amount of training and mechanical equipment was needed. It was possible to compose and print a paper in a remarkably small building space. A single room was frequently adequate housing. A Washington or Franklin hand press, a few cases of type, a foot-treadle job press, a pair of type sticks, one or two galleys, a proof press, ink, chases, roller and pan were sufficient."

[3] Ibid.

[4] William Cooper Howells, Recollections of Life in Ohio from 1813 to 1840 (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co., 1894), pp. 163-65.

Howells has left a description of Alexander Campbell's printing plant, a somewhat larger operation than his own.[5] Around 1827, Howells went to work in Campbell's printing plant at Bethany, Virginia. The equipment was housed in a sixteen-foot square frame house on the edge of a creek. The creek facilitated the wetting down of the paper, which was done to make it pliable enough to receive a good impression from the often irregular type. The printing equipment consisted of two double stands of type, a bank to make up the forms on, and one wooden hand press. On this simple equipment, the Christian Baptist and a vast number of pamphlets and books were printed. The debate with Robert Owen, which was printed at this time, required the setting up of additional stands in the open-air shed. Campbell's operation was a fairly large one for the time and he employed men to do the actual printing. Working as a pressman, Howells found he could make a dollar on a good day, being paid at the rate of twelve and one-half cents a token. This meant the printing of 2,000 sheets, each generally containing sixteen pages which, when folded, was called octavo.

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[5] Ibid.

A flood of periodicals, often painfully short-lived, poured forth from Disciples presses. Among those prior to 1860, as noted by Dr. Spencer, twenty were published in Ohio, sixteen in Kentucky, twelve in Indiana, and a smaller number each in Pennsylvania, Virginia, Illinois, Missouri, Tennessee, North Carolina, Louisiana, Mississippi, California, Arkansas, Georgia, Maryland, Iowa, South Carolina, and Texas.[6] This list is the most complete available, but it is possible there were at least as many again, of even more ephemeral nature, copies of which have not come to light, and each one had just as much authority among the Disciples as the ability of the editor and the size of its circulation list could provide.

As early as 1841 Barton W. Stone was urging fewer periodicals, and he noted in his Christian Messenger that the editor of the Christian Publisher felt that there should be only one Disciples periodical.[7]

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[6] Spencer, Periodicals of the Disciples.

Two years earlier Alexander Campbell had taken note of this trend of proliferating periodicals among the Disciples, and he condemned it.[8] In his article, Campbell made the following points:

1. Time can be better spent in preaching. Editing draws men away from the pulpit.

2. Numerous periodicals impose an unnecessary financial burden on the reading community.

3. Editors are always seeking something new and thus tend to too much speculation.

4. The elementary principles are lost for the sake of hearing what others have to say on the subject. And in concluding his article, Campbell asked the question:

> When a community is once organized, has every member of it, on his own motion, a right to appear as its public advocate, either as a preacher or an editor, or ought he wait for a call and an appointment from that community?[9]

Campbell concluded that the cause had suffered much injury from young and inexperienced editors who assumed responsibility on their own motion and he suggested one monthly and one weekly for the brotherhood.

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[7] "Periodicals," Christian Messenger, XI (July, 1841), 382.

[8] "Too Many Periodicals," Millennial Harbinger, III (November, 1839), 548-50.

[9] Ibid., p. 550.

Here, then, with Campbell's very early perceptive insight, one arrives at the problem brought about by the development and use of the periodical among the Disciples--the role of the editors in the development of the Disciples' thought and practice. Editors occupied, by the very nature of the Disciples' structure, or lack of it, a decisive position. Garrison and DeGroot, authors of the most widely accepted history of the denomination, have characterized the Disciples as ". . . a people who had always been guided more by its editors than by its ecclesiastics or its scholars."[10] A familiar saying among the Disciples from the time of W. T. Moore, Disciples preacher and historian, has been: "The Disciples of Christ do not have bishops, they have editors."[11] Moore wrote:

> But there can be no doubt about the fact that, from the beginning of the movement to the present time, the chief authority in regard to all important questions has

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[10] W. E. Garrison and A. T. DeGroot, The Disciples of Christ, a History (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1958), p. 364.

[11] W. T. Moore, Comprehensive History of the Disciples of Christ (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1909), p. 12. Also quoted in James DeF. Murch, Christians Only (Cincinnati: The Standard Publishing Co., 1962), p. 147.

been the Disciple press.[12]

Realizing the power and lure of the editorial chair, Campbell and Stone saw the fragmenting tendencies of a multiplicity of privately-conducted periodicals, each with its own particular hobby.[13]

The situation, including the competition which rapidly developed, seemed to demand one weekly and one monthly publication to speak with authority for the brotherhood. Though Campbell's suggestion was good, as time has demonstrated, his position was vulnerable and nothing came of it. Which periodical would it be? Campbell had no more official call to publish the Millennial Harbinger than John Thomas had to publish the Advocate for the Testimony of God, or John O'Kane had for the Christian Casket, or Robert Mack had for the Highway of Holiness, and so on through the entire list of periodicals. There was no official body outside of the local congregation to give a call to an editor or to a preacher. Campbell himself differed in his relation to the brotherhood as an editor from Arthur Crihfield, for instance, only in that the Millennial Harbinger had a vastly larger reading audience and acceptance than the Heretic Detector possessed. A freedom assumed for himself could not be denied conveniently to others. Less than ten years after Campbell raised the question of the danger of too many periodicals, an endeavor was made to establish an authorized publishing concern for the brotherhood, revealing that others were concerned about the problem. When the time came for concrete action, however, Campbell found himself opposed to the move.[14]

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[12] Ibid., p. 699.

[13] See Clark, p. 34. "To editors, their papers were vital things. They regarded every issue to come as a son after an unbroken series of daughters."

While the country was deluged with the fruits of hopeful editorial labors, few of the periodicals attained a wide enough circulation to be of more than local importance, and still fewer lasted for more than a year or two. Some editors were persistent in spite of temporary setbacks. Dr. John Thomas edited the Advocate for the Testimony of God at Philadelphia for five years (1834-1839), moved it to Richmond and having re-named it Apostolic Advocate, published it for two years, then moved again to Amelia, Virginia, and called the paper Prophetic Interpreter.[15] The changes lengthened its life if not its circulation list. A few years after the demise of the Prophetic Interpreter, he began the Herald of the Future Age, and finally managed to last as long as ten years with the Herald of the

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[14] See p. 29.

[15] Spencer, Periodicals of the Disciples.

Kingdom.[16]

The Christian Baptist, The Christian Messenger, and The Millennial Harbinger

Of the many periodicals that arose among the Disciples prior to 1860, the three widest known and most influential were the Christian Baptist, the Christian Messenger, and the Millennial Harbinger. The first and last were edited by Alexander Campbell, and the Messenger was edited by Barton W. Stone. These papers, like many others both religious and secular, owed their public acceptance to the personalities of their editors and, in turn, added immeasurably to the influence of their editors. It was the same situation Clark had in mind when he wrote:

> Every Southern paper reflected the personality of its editor. The term "personal journalism" was most accurately used when applied to the weekly press. Here the editor virtually was the paper.[17]

Alexander Campbell published the first issue of the Christian Baptist at Buffaloe (Bethany), Brooke County, Virginia, on August 3rd, 1823. The last issue was on July 5th, 1830, completing seven volumes. Campbell stated his purpose in the preface to the first edition. He proposed to publish a non-sectarian religious journal, devoted to the revelation of truth and the exposure of error, perfectly independent and free from any controlling jurisdiction except the Bible. Campbell justified his entry into the already crowded field of religious journalism on the ground that most editors, conscious of sectarian control, were very cautious about what they published. He wrote:

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[16] Ibid. For an excellent account of the trials, tribulations, mergers, etc. of one Disciple paper, see W. E. Tucker, J. H. Garrison and the Disciples of Christ (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1964).

[17] Clark, The Southern Country Editor, p. 34.

> Some of them are very consciously attentive to avoid giving offense; insomuch, that when an article is presented for insertion, the first objection to it sometimes is, "the people will not like this, and you know a man must please his customers." All this may do very well when a writer proposes to please his readers, or when he pledges himself to support the tenets or practices of any people. But when the exhibition of truth and righteousness is proposed, neither the passions nor the prejudices of men--neither the reputation nor the pecuniary interest of the writer, should be consulted.[18]

The Christian Baptist was issued monthly in the pamphlet form typical of religious periodicals of the time. The typography and presswork were average according to the standard of periodical literature.

Campbell's use of the Christian Baptist was twofold. On the positive side, he outlined in detail his thoughts on the New Testament church. His more positive views began in Volume II, with his series of essays on the work of the Holy Spirit and his series of essays on the restoration of the ancient order. The Christian Baptist, while it gave the world its first view of Alexander Campbell's theology, is perhaps best remembered for the biting, incisive sarcasm of Campbell's iconoclastic pen, for Campbell felt he had to tear down the old superstructures of Christendom before he could build the new. With rapier-like words, he attacked the foibles of the clergy, of conventional Christianity, of church synods, councils, and ecclesiastical forms. As could be expected from an iconoclastic publication in the hands of a man with great intelligence and skill with words, the Christian Baptist quickly gained a wide circulation on the frontier and a place larger than its circulation would warrant in the discussions of men. At the conclusion of Volume I, after all the stormy controversy which seemed to be the element of the Christian Baptist, Campbell remarked:

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[18] "Preface," Christian Baptist, I (Aug., 1823), 8.

> I have acted very imprudently, say many, in the exhibition of the matter contained in this volume. If I had not been so plain and so full in opposing many popular plans, just in the commencement, I might have, say they, a more extensive circulation for this paper. I confess I used none of this sort of policy. My great object was to please myself. And as to policy, I acted under the impression of the truth of that

> adage which says, "Honesty is the best policy."[19]

The Christian Baptist marked Campbell as a figure to be reckoned with, a controversialist who demanded and received either warm-hearted support or violent opposition. It was the readers of the Christian Baptist who filled the ranks of the "Campbellites," or "Reformers," as a party within the Baptist Church. It was not Alexander Campbell, the debater, who became the acknowledged leader of a party, but it was Alexander Campbell, the editor. The periodical provided the vehicle for a sustained presentation of theology to multitudes of men. Campbell voluntarily suspended publication of the Christian Baptist in 1830 in order to replace it with the Millennial Harbinger. His wealth, which enabled him to own his own printing establishment, enabled him to carry on his editorial career without having to be concerned about the financial aspect of publishing.

Barton W. Stone established the Christian Messenger in 1826 at Georgetown, Kentucky, and continued to edit and publish it at intervals until 1844. In December of 1836 Stone wrote that the Messenger, by now moved to Jacksonville, Illinois, might be in its last issue. Unlike Campbell, Stone had no personal wealth, and the editorship of the paper

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[19] "Conclusion of Volume I," Christian Baptist, I (July, 1824), 300.

(which included publication responsibility) often imposed financial hardship upon him.[20] In 1836 his circulation was between 1,700 and 1,800, but many subscribers neglected to pay the dollar subscription price.[21] Stone was assisted in his editorial duties at Georgetown by John T. Johnson and later at Jacksonville by T. M. Allen, Jacob Creath, Jr., and D. Pat Henderson.

Stone had to struggle constantly to eke out a living, and his tribulations as an editor were great in comparison to those of Campbell.[22] By the end of 1841 Stone had decided to discontinue the Christian Messenger, but he had a stroke that prevented his preaching--his first love--so he continued as editor. With a partner, he bought a press and engaged a printer (prior to this time his work had been done on contract). He produced a thirty-two page monthly at an annual subscription rate of $1.25.[23]

Stone's periodical was similar in size to the Christian Baptist, though not quite as well printed. The content was generally irenic in nature, as was the editor. To be iconoclastic was alien to Stone's nature. Like other periodicals of the day, including Campbell's, the Messenger contained numerous articles expounding the beliefs of the editor, contributed articles, correspondence, and news of the churches. There are surprisingly few references to Campbell in the pages of the Messenger, with the exception of the editorial controversy of 1840 over the atonement of Christ and the name of the movement.

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[20] Barton W. Stone, "Notice," Christian Messenger, X (Dec., 1836), 190.

[21] Ibid.

[22] William G. West, Barton Warren Stone: Early American Advocate of Christian Unity (Nashville: The Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1954), p. 134.

[23] "Introduction," Christian Messenger, XII (Nov., 1841), 1.

Alexander Campbell commenced publication of the Millennial Harbinger in 1830 as he had planned the previous year. In his opening statement of Volume VII of the Christian Baptist, dated July 4th, 1829, he informed his readers of his plan to bring the Baptist to a close. He was careful to point out that it was not for a lack of success, noting that he had gotten a new subscriber or reader for every day the past six years, and his opponents had dwindled to nothing. Indeed, the Harbinger owed its origin to a change in the purpose of the editor. He now proposed a work of broader scope and less controversial nature.

The Millennial Harbinger became, by the force of Campbell's personality and the scope of its circulation, the normative paper among the Disciples of Christ. While the authority of Campbell may not have been formally conferred within an ecclesiastical framework, his support generally meant success for a person or a project, and his opposition was more often than not a withering blight. The Millennial Harbinger retained its leadership until Campbell's death in 1864.

Some Early Controversies Among The Editors

The pages of the Millennial Harbinger give evidence of the first internal controversies among the Disciples. In the days of the Christian Baptist, the Disciples were still largely unformed as a distinct body and had not yet united with the Christians of Kentucky. Barton W. Stone, principal editor and leader among the Christians of the West, was not a controversialist by nature. His quarrels were principally in response to attacks from Presbyterians. After the Reformers and Christians came together in Lexington, Kentucky, in 1832, the movement may be said to have been launched as an independent church--the Disciples of Christ. While Disciples editors were often busy answering charges and making counter-charges against other religious groups, it was inevitable that internal differences would arise, and the only court provided was that of public opinion. Clark could have been speaking of Disciples editors when he wrote:

> Much editorial battling resulted from a rural and frontier sensitiveness, but some of it was due to the clumsy, blunt expression and

> tactlessness of many half-educated editors, who were unable to campaign for an idea without writing personal attacks on opponents. They pitched headlong into battle, shouting bold and defiant words which invited trouble.[24]

The fact that public opinion was the only court added greatly to the influence of the editors and led many of them to set themselves up as the advocates of orthodoxy and the opponents of heterodoxy, thus hammering out the meaning and content of orthodoxy for the Disciples in the pages of their periodicals.

One of the earliest cases was that of Dr. John Thomas, a Disciples convert, preacher, and editor. He was the editor and publisher of the Apostolic Advocate. In his first volume, he published an article on baptism, entitled "Anabaptism."[25] This proved to be the beginning of an extremely prolonged and bitter controversy when Alexander Campbell took exception to his viewpoint in the pages of the Millennial Harbinger.[26] Dr. Thomas found that he had stepped beyond the bounds of acceptable orthodoxy when he began advocating re-baptism of persons previously immersed and accepted in full fellowship by the Disciples. In the course of his career, Dr. Thomas entertained a number of novel views, including final "soul sleep," the annihilation of the soul of the unbeliever. The point to be noted here, however, is that Campbell did not hesitate to use the pages of the Harbinger to censure and oppose him, just as Thomas did not hesitate to use his periodical to advance his own particular point of view. The weight of Campbell's opposition was tremendous. By the summer of 1837, Thomas was complaining about Campbell's "excommunication" of him, and Campbell personally travelled to Richmond in October 1838 to preach against Dr. Thomas. The weight of this opposition was sufficient to limit Dr. Thomas' influence to a few hearty souls in this country, but in England he proceeded to create new turmoil among the churches and to generate another round of periodical warfare.[27]

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[24] Clark, The Southern Country Editor, p. 36.

[25] John Thomas, Apostolic Advocate, I (Oct., 1834), 121 ff.

[26] See the Millennial Harbinger, V (Extra, Aug., 1834), 411 and VI (Sept., 1835), 418 for Campbell's replies to Dr. Thomas' article. This controversy was carried into the British churches when Thomas went to England. For this phase, see the British Millennial Harbinger, VII (Aug., 1848), 387, also XV (Oct., 1850), 476 ff. for a summation of the British controversy. Some British churches

England, it seems, had its share of personal

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were unaware that Thomas was in bad favor in America, and received him. Others did not and the British periodicals took up the battle that had by then been dropped in America. A brief summation of the Thomas-Campbell controversy can be found in Z. T. Sweeney, Crises (a scrapbook located in the Disciples of Christ Historical Society).

[27] See the British Millennial Harbinger, VII (Aug., 1848), 387.

journalism.[28] The Gospel Banner had originated in a dispute between Wallis, the editor of the British Millennial Harbinger, and Hudston, who became the editor of the new journal. The Banner favored Thomas, and the Harbinger opposed him. In the resulting confusion, some of the churches were opened to Dr. Thomas, while others refused to recognize him. Ultimately, his followers banded together and formed a new sect--the Christadelphians.

While the Disciples claimed to be purely congregational in church government, with no higher authority in an ecclesiastical sense, the Harbinger and Campbell proved extremely effective in limiting the influence of Dr. Thomas' theological excursions. His relatively greater success among the British churches emphasizes the controlling influence of the Harbinger in the United States. The extra-congregational authority of the "Sage of Bethany" was great enough in 1840 that John Udell, who resided in Monroe County, Pennsylvania, could walk eighty miles to Bethany and return with letters enabling him to settle an internal dispute in his own congregation.[29]

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[28] Clark, The Southern Country Editor, p. 34. Clark defines the term "personal journalism" as the complete identification of the editor and his paper.

[29] John Udell, Incidents of Travel to California (Los Angeles: N. A. Kovach, 1946), p. 190.

Campbell also entered into editorial controversies with Barton W. Stone, editor of the Christian Messenger, and with Walter Scott, editor of the Evangelist. The stature of these men was almost as great within the movement as was the stature of Campbell, and their differences emphasized the varieties of opinion among Disciples and the penchant of Disciples editors for airing these differences freely.

From 1838 to 1840, the pages of the Millennial Harbinger and the Evangelist revealed a disagreement between Campbell and Scott over who first preached the "ancient gospel." Campbell claimed that its terms were formulated in 1823; Scott claimed that he first preached it in the familiar "five-finger exercise" form in 1827.[30] By 1840 the discussion had shifted to disagreement over the terms of the "ancient gospel,"[31] and as the editorial language grew more heated Campbell complained, in reference to Scott, that an editor had no right to implicate the moral excellence or purity of a brother.[32] The whole affair finally sputtered into a truce of silence and the only lasting effect was to leave testimony to the vanity and combativeness of even the most influential Disciples editors.

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[30] Walter Scott, Evangelist, New Series, I (Dec., 1838), 279.

[31] Ibid., VIII (July, 1840), 157 and VIII (Sept., 1840), 201.

[32] "The Evangelist," Millennial Harbinger, New Series, IV (Sept., 1840), 417.

There were sincere doctrinal differences between Campbell and Stone. The two men had a warm respect for one another, but they had never been particularly close. In temperament and background they were poles apart. Campbell was suspicious of Stone's orthodoxy on several points, and he showed no initiative editorially in consummating the union between the Reformers and the Christians in 1832. There was a great deal of suspicion in the days immediately following the union among both Reformers and Christians, both of whom feared his side may have "sold out" in the process of union. In 1840 Stone and Campbell aired their different interpretations of the atonement in the pages of their respective journals.[33] At the same time they were in a controversy over the name "Unitarian," which had been applied to Stone and his followers.[34] Finally, in August 1841, Stone issued an extra number containing a synopsis of his views on the atonement, and the controversy died down without really resulting in anything except perhaps the utter confusion of some of their less theologically literate readers.

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[33] See the Christian Messenger, XI (Sept., 1840), 3, 8, 14, and 21.

[34] See the Millennial Harbinger, New Series, IV (Jan., 1840), 21, 22, and IV (Feb., 1840), 81. Also see Christian Messenger, XI (Oct., Nov., and Dec., 1840).

The American Christian Publication Society

The situation which prevailed as a result of this free-wheeling style of un-coordinated, independent journalism led men other than Stone and Campbell to consider the advantages of a brotherhood-owned press that could speak with a note of authority for the Disciples as a whole. So far, the editor spoke only for himself and was responsible to no one, yet he sought the patronage and support of the entire brotherhood.

The Cincinnati Christian Tract Society was organized in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1848. Its object was modest in scope, consisting primarily of the distribution of tracts undertaken by a small group of churchmen in Cincinnati. Events of the next few years, however, caused its leaders, principally David Staats Burnet, to envision its expansion into a brotherhood publishing house.

On October 23, 1849, the first General Convention of the Christian Churches met in Cincinnati.[35] Three days later the American Christian Missionary Society was constituted. This was an epoch-making event in the development of the Disciples. The movement had been hampered from its beginning by an attitude of extreme antipathy toward any form of extra-congregational authority or organization.[36] As the Disciples grew from a small protest movement to one embracing thousands of members and hundreds of churches, the need for some sort of organization to accomplish the mission of the church became painfully apparent, and such a move received the support of Alexander Campbell as well as many others. The Convention in Cincinnati was called by a few church leaders as individuals and given publicity in the journals of the brotherhood. The organization of the American Christian Missionary Society was the first order of business of the Convention. The Society was to be composed of Annual Delegates, Life Members, and Life Directors. Any church or missionary society could appoint a delegate for a contribution of ten dollars. A gift of twenty dollars constituted one a member for life, and one hundred dollars created a life director.[37] The first meeting was held at the Christian Chapel Church, where David S. Burnet was minister.[38] Alexander Campbell was elected president of the Society, Burnet a vice-president, and T. J. Melish was among the managers named.[39] All of these men were to figure in the future of the publication society.

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[35] Report of the Proceedings of the General Convention of the Christian Churches of the United States of America; Held in Cincinnati Tuesday, October 23rd, 1849; Together with the Annual Report of the American Christian Bible Society, and the Second Annual Report of the Christian Tract Society (Cincinnati: American Christian Depository, 1849). Hereafter referred to as Report of the Proceedings, 1849.

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[36] As evidence of this fear of authority, a committee reported on a motion asking that the churches seek the advice of neighboring congregations before ordaining an Evangelist. There was much debate. J. G. Tompkins, one of the participants, stated his belief that every congregation had a right to send out an Evangelist, and if he were appointed Evangelist by any church, he would go out in defiance of all the other churches in the world. The meeting finally adjourned without reaching a decision and later decided simply to urge the churches to take care who they ordained. Report of the Proceedings, 1849, p. 33.

During the organizational meeting of the American Christian Missionary Society, John O'Kane read a letter to the Convention from the Annual Meeting of the Indiana Churches. The letter contained three resolutions concerning the Cincinnati Christian Tract Society:

> 1. Resolved, that we commend the Cincinnati Christian Tract Society to the favorable attention of the brotherhood in this state; and that we advise them to cooperate in this Christian enterprise, by forming auxiliaries.
> 2. Resolved, that we highly approve of the efforts of the brethren in the state of Ohio to supply the brotherhood with a Sunday School library; and that in the judgment of this meeting, the brethren in the state of Indiana should co-operate with them in this work, and, therefore, unanimously,
> 3. Resolved, that we appoint a Committee of three to meet the publishing committee in Cincinnati, on the 23 inst.[40]

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[37] Report of the Proceedings, 1849, p. 2.

[38] Ibid., p. 5.

[39] Ibid., p. 4.

[40] Ibid., p. 13.

L. H. Jameson, John O'Kane, and S. W. Leonard were appointed to this committee by the Indiana churches.[41]

From this letter it may be inferred that, at least in the minds of some, the Cincinnati Christian Tract Society might develop into something of more than local significance, and within the rather hesitant, fumbling, organizational pattern of the brotherhood in 1849 some delegates came to Cincinnati with that in mind. The development of a compact Sunday School library to be made available to the churches had long been a dream of David S. Burnet, but it was still only a dream in 1849. If this could be done by the Cincinnati Christian Tract Society, the Disciples would have the beginning of a brotherhood publishing business owned other than by an individual.

Alexander Campbell apparently had knowledge of this idea before the Convention met, and he opposed it. Campbell wrote that he opposed the Convention itself, if one of its objects was to form a "great book concern."[42] Such a development would threaten the personal hegemony of Campbell and the Millennial Harbinger and shift the center of the brotherhood from Bethany to Cincinnati. Whatever faults he may have had, Campbell never underestimated the power of the press.

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[41] Ibid.

[42] "Convention," Millennial Harbinger, Series III, VI (Aug., 1849), 475, 476.

In fearing the establishment of a "great book concern," Campbell may have had in mind the singular success of the Western Methodist Book Concern in Cincinnati.[43] The Methodists had opened a small wholesale book store there in 1820 which had an immediate success, showing a profit of $14,000 in the first three years of operation. Around 1832 the establishment was expanded to include a printing office which issued the first Methodist newspaper west of the mountains. This was the Western Christian Advocate, a weekly which became "the most influential family newspaper in the West."[44] The Western Methodist Book Concern expanded rapidly during the 1830's and its physical plant was enlarged to include facilities for publishing books.[45] By the 1850's the printing office employed twenty-five hands and kept five steam presses in constant operation, while the bindery had forty-six employees. The annual output of books and periodicals was valued at $125,000.[46] Their periodicals had a combined circulation of 85,000 in 1854.[47] The business was solidly established on a profitable basis.

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[43] Walter Sutton, The Western Book Trade: Cincinnati As a Nineteenth Century Publishing and Book Trade Center (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1961), p. 150.

[44] Ibid., p. 155.

[45] Ibid., p. 156.

[46] Ibid., p. 159.

Campbell's fears and Burnet's vision were probably both stimulated as much by the success of the Methodist printing operation in Cincinnati as by the obvious drawbacks of the Disciples' competitive brand of personal journalism. The success of the Western Methodist Book Concern was even greater than that of the secular publishing houses located in Cincinnati at the time. The profits of the Cincinnati operation amounted to $75,000 between 1861 and 1864 and by 1892-95, the profits amounted to $549,634.42.[48]

The Disciples action in 1849 was on a much smaller basis than that of the Methodists, but it was a start. The next resolution in the General Convention which concerned the Cincinnati Christian Tract Society was made by J. J. Moss as follows:

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[47] Ibid., p. 160.

[48] Ibid., p. 162. The possibilities, both financial and ecclesiastical, inherent in the Disciples' Publication Society can only be speculated upon, since the Society never did receive the united support of the brotherhood. However, one of the principal reasons given by Sutton of the Methodist success when secular concerns were failing was basically lacking among the Disciples: an organized itinerant ministry. These men served as distributing agents and were paid commissions and the presiding elder of a preacher's district also received a percentage of the preacher's sales (see page 152). The other factor lacking among the Disciples was a unified, authoritative overhead organization.

> Resolved, that this Convention heartily approve of the effort of the brethren of Ohio to get up a Sunday School Library, and that we will co-operate with them, and thus have a library for the brotherhood.[49]

A committee of ten was appointed to consider this resolution.[50] The committee report requested the Convention to recommend that the Cincinnati Christian Tract Society become the Society of the Brotherhood at large, and that the Convention appoint a committee of twenty-five on the publication of the Sunday School library and that the said committee should form a part of the Executive Board of the Tract Society. The recommendation was adopted.[51] J. J. Moss then moved:

> Resolved, that this Convention recommend to the Cincinnati Christian Tract Society so to alter the name of their Society, and Constitution, if necessary, as to make it a general Society, and that then it be recommended by this Convention to the cordial support of the brotherhood throughout the reformation.[52]

This resolution was also passed by the Convention.[53]

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[49] Report of the Proceedings, 1849, p. 35.

[50] Ibid., p. 5. The committee consisted of Goodwin, Scott, Palmer, Challen, Morton, Young, Pendleton, Campbell, Davenport, and Burnet.

[51] Ibid., p. 36.

[52] Ibid., p. 37.

[53] Ibid.

Thus the foundation was laid at the General Convention for the development of a society responsible to the churches as a whole for the purpose of publishing Sunday School materials. This was one step in the direction of the course other denominations, with their denominationally-owned and controlled publishing houses, had already successfully taken and, if successful, a publishing society might end the individualistic bickering of many editors, each purporting to speak for the whole brotherhood.

The adoption of these resolutions foreshadowed a vast change in the scope of the Cincinnati Christian Tract Society. At the Annual Meeting of the Society in Cincinnati on October 21, 1849, the finance committee reported that the Society owned ninety-six pages of stereotype plates and nine tracts. Over 99,000 copies, consisting of a total of 398,400 pages, had been printed since 1848. The Society had spent $200.30 in publishing tracts and had received $18.97 from their sale. It had distributed 348,400 pages gratuitously and had on hand 10,000 pages.[54] This work, though good, was extremely limited in scope. The object of the Society, taken from its Constitution, was "to diffuse the knowledge of the Christian religion, by the publication and circulation of religious tracts." Its support came from individual members, who became such by means of a gift of one dollar. Ten dollars made one a life member, and twenty-five dollars made one a life director.

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[54] Ibid., p. 81.

On November 6, 1849, the Board of the Cincinnati Christian Tract Society met in order to carry out the wishes of the General Convention.[55] Nothing definite was done at the meeting except that the Board expressed its agreement to a change in the name and function of the Society. "American Christian Tract Society" was the new name adopted, and the local organization formally became an organization of the Disciples churches as a whole.

In 1850 the American Christian Bible, Tract, and Missionary Societies convened again in Cincinnati.[56] David S. Burnet was president of the American Christian Bible Society, Alexander Campbell headed the American Christian Missionary Society, and B. S. Lawson was president of the American Christian Tract Society. All were organized along the same lines, a pattern that was to become familiar to generations of Disciples.

The American Christian Tract Society reported nothing yet done in the way of publishing books because of a lack of funds. The corresponding secretary recommended that the Society buy books for re-sale instead of attempting to publish them.[57] Meeting as a whole, the Society voted to become the Society of the brotherhood at large.[58] A new constitution was presented and adopted. According to this, the name was altered to "Christian Tract and Sunday School Society," and the object was changed to include the publication and circulation of Sunday School books.

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[55] _Ibid._, pp. 87, 88.

[56] _Report of the Proceedings of the American Christian Bible, Missionary, and Tract Societies, for the Year 1850, Together with other Documents and an Address to the Christian Churches_ (Cincinnati: American Christian Depository, 1850).

In the 1851 Convention the American Christian Bible Society recommended to the Boards of the Missionary and Tract Societies that they issue a periodical, in co-operation with one another, to be the official organ of the Societies. The others agreed, and the Christian Age was adopted as the official organ of the three Societies.[59] The Tract Society requested Jethro Jackson to move his Christian Sunday-School Journal to Cincinnati and publish it under the aegis of the Board of Managers of the Society.[60] Subsequently, the Society purchased and published both the

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[57] Ibid., p. 51.

[58] Ibid., p. 54.

[59] Report of the Proceedings of the American Christian Bible, Missionary, and Publication Societies for the Year 1851, Together with other Documents (Cincinnati: American Christian Publication Society, 1851), p. 21.

[60] Ibid., p. 63.

Christian Age and the Sunday-School Journal, paying Jackson $3,000 in the spring of 1852 for his interest.[61] Thus the brotherhood finally owned a periodical that could be developed into an official organ; it already had the support of the three Societies. Benjamin Franklin became the editor of the publication.

Still another new constitution was adopted in the 1851 meeting, and the Christian Tract and Sunday School Society became the "American Christian Publication Society." The change in name reflected the enlarging concept of the purpose of the Society. This was also reflected in the Constitution, which was amended in 1851 so as to include the publication and circulation of religious tracts, Sunday School books, and other religious works.[62]

The business of the Society did not grow greatly during 1851. It had sold 97,200 pages for about $81.00. As yet the Society had published only a few tracts and a Sunday School hymnbook. The library plan moved slowly. A collection of books to furnish to local church libraries at a cost of from five to thirty dollars had been assembled from outside publishers, and forty-seven libraries were thus supplied.[63] However, the year brought two developments full of promise: the oversight of a periodical as an official organ, and the development of a Depository,[64] or book store, housed in the Eighth and Walnut Street church of David Burnet. The Depository was largely Burnet's work. The Treasurer of the American Christian Publication Society noted $556.41 received during the year and $430.89 spent.[65] This compared with receipts of $2,651.62 for the American Christian Bible Society,[66] and receipts of $2,758.87 for the American Christian Missionary Society.[67] Lack of financial support greatly hampered the work of all three Societies and led those interested in the work of the Publication Society to seek a means of raising more money.

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[61] Report of the Proceedings of the Convention of the Churches of Christ at the Anniversaries of the American Christian Bible, Missionary, and Publication Societies; Held in Cincinnati October 21, 22, and 23, 1856 (Cincinnati: J. R. Hunter and Co., Printers, 1856), p. 15.

[62] Report of the Proceedings, 1851, p. 57.

At the close of the 1852 Convention some had proposed to connect the American Christian Publication Society with a stock institution, to be called the Christian Book Union.[68] Stockholders would then own the enterprise and

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[62] Report of the Proceedings, 1851, p. 57.

[63] Ibid., p. 61.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid., p. 68.

[66] Ibid., p. 16.

[67] Ibid., p. 47.

[68] Report of the Proceedings of the Convention of

operate it according to normal business procedures. The failure of this move assured that the Society would remain a benevolent institution. Had the stock plan succeeded, it would have paid dividends (assuming there would have been any profits) to private stockholders.

The report for the year 1853 noted the purchase of the Christian Age and Sunday-School Journal by the Publication Society. The circulation of the Age at that time was supposedly 6,200, and the circulation of the Journal was around 8,000.[69] Other publications of the Society were a second edition of the Sunday School hymnbook, Burnet's Jerusalem Mission, L. L. Pinkerton's Scripture Questions, and a new edition of the life of Barton W. Stone.[70]

At last the Society was truly in the publishing business. In addition to this work, renewed editions of the tracts were issued, and the Depository contained a number of volumes of various publishers. The corresponding secretary reported:

> In looking at the future of this Society, we have cheering and sanguine anticipations

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the Churches of Christ at the Anniversaries of the American Christian Bible, Missionary and Publication Societies; Held in Cincinnati, October 18th, 19th, and 20th, 1853 (Cincinnati: American Christian Publication Society, 1853), p. 50.

[69] Ibid., p. 51.

[70] Ibid.

> of success. When we see what has been done for Methodism and Presbyterianism and all the other isms through means of their literature and profits upon it appropriated to the furtherance of these causes, we are justified in believing this Society to be in no wise inferior to the others in wideness of sphere and usefulness.[71]

The Society then proceeded to resolve that it become incorporated as a benevolent institution, a move perhaps precipitated by the Christian Book Union Plan.[72]

David S. Burnet, who was appointed general agent of the Publication Society, energetically pursued his task of raising money. In his report at the 1853 session, Burnet wrote in glowing terms of the field of service open to the Society:

> All denominations have their publications as the right arm of their power . . . . We must have our approved issues, in which we shall have a literary and monetary proprietorship. . . . What a few private periodicals were to the cause in its infancy, a great publication establishment should be to a body of Herculean proportions and power.[73]

Here Burnet stated the principal issue, and in the process he declared for the very journalistic development Campbell had emphatically opposed in 1849. The issue was drawn still more closely as Burnet continued his report:

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[71] Ibid., p. 53.

[72] Ibid., p. 55.

[73] Ibid., p. 58.

> Several private establishments might divide the patronage of the brethren . . . but they would support private interests and waste public treasures, and expose the whole enterprise of publication to constant interruption by the necessities and caprice of individuals, and the inroads of death upon their ranks. The experience of all denominations and associations is decidedly in favor of union of effort, and concentration of means.[74]

Burnet stated quite clearly the journalistic situation among the Disciples and held out the benefits of a responsible united effort. The issue was then clear: Was the journalistic enterprise of the Disciples to be channeled into a common official publishing endeavor, supporting the brotherhood causes with its profits, or was the press to remain in individual hands exclusively, subject to "the caprice of individuals" and "the inroads of death?"[75]

The answer to this was clear in the mind of at least one powerful Disciple editor, Alexander Campbell. Campbell had no intention of allowing Cincinnati to usurp journalistic leadership from his own Millennial Harbinger. Intimations of what his reaction would be had already appeared in the June 1853 issue of the Harbinger. Burnet had sent a notice advertising the "Publication House of the Brethren" to the Harbinger and the notice was published together with the following editorial comment:

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[74] Ibid., p. 59.

[75] Burnet may have had reference to Campbell's advanced age, as well as the recent deaths of other prominent leaders.

> The Book Union scheme, it would appear, has now been abandoned, and, in lieu, thereof, the idea of a "Publication House of the Brethren" has been conceived, and already has it been partially realized. Although not fully comprehending the wisdom of the repeated changes in this department, we hope for the best.[76]

The general tone of the comment, signed "AWC," was cool at best and sarcastic to say the least.

The heavy guns of the Harbinger were fully loaded, and the full-scale attack on the Publication Society began in April 1854 and continued without respite until the next meeting of the Societies in October. W. K. Pendleton, Alexander Campbell's son-in-law, served as chief artillerist. In an article entitled, "Shall We Have a Publication Society?" Pendleton opposed such a society on the grounds that it was unscriptural, impractical, and unnecessary. He argued that good books would find publication without such a Society and pointed out that the Christian Publication Society had neither authors nor definite plans. As for the use of the profits for benevolent purposes, Pendleton argued that the result would not justify the cost, and anyway it was unscriptural to support ministers in such a fashion. He felt that such an organization would publish inferior books for business profits, and he wrote:

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[76] Millennial Harbinger, Series IV, III (June, 1853), 359.

> The reader who reads the book is precisely the man to pay for it, and the author who writes a book, is precisely the man who ought to receive the profits from it.[77]

In all, Professor Pendleton gave a clear rebuttal to David S. Burnet and the expanded operation of the Publication Society, and in so doing he restated the good old American axiom of private enterprise.

A second article by Pendleton appeared in the June 1854 issue of the Harbinger.[78] An April attack on the Society had been answered by Benjamin Franklin in the Christian Age of May 4th. Franklin had chided Pendleton for not objecting to the publication society sooner, and Pendleton replied that he agreed with the limited objectives of distributing religious tracts and Sunday School books but objected to adding "and other religious works" as an object of the Society.[79] In short, a Publication Society was all right until it began infringing on ground already staked out by the Harbinger. Pendleton objected that the Society had never been ratified by the churches and would not be until they supported it financially (a very pragmatic means of determining ratification). As to the periodicals, Pendleton asserted that they should stand or fall on their own merits, not as a result of Society patronage. Then Pendleton left his direct objections to insert what proved to be a most damaging charge against the Society:

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[77] Millennial Harbinger, Series IV, IV (April, 1854), 213.

[78] "The Christian Publication Society," Millennial Harbinger, Series IV, IV (June, 1854), 338-347.

[79] Ibid., p. 342.

> Has not the "Publication Society" used nearly a thousand dollars of the funds of the Missionary Society? And if so, what authority have they thus to pervert the use of funds entrusted to them by brethren for a cause that they have adopted, to one which they have, in the most practically efficient way, rejected? Have not the funds which have been sent to the Bible Society, in the shape of donations for Bible revision and Life Membership in the Bible Union, been used, either in part or in whole, in the same way? Has not the money which has been sent in for getting out the new Library, been spent, without having been appropriated in that way? Is not the Society in debt for the expenses incurred so far in getting out this Library? And has the funds on hand to replace these perversions of sacred trust committed by the brethren abroad to various committees in Cincinnati? Let these questions be answered . . .[80]

This article hit the Publication Society like a bombshell. It contained a series of most damaging charges, all the way from outright dishonesty to malfeasance of office. If true, the Society would have no claim whatever on the patronage of the brotherhood.

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[80] Ibid., p. 345.

A personal conference was held at Bethany on June 30, 1834, between W. K. Pendleton, representing the Harbinger, and David S. Burnet, representing the Society.[81] Pendleton revealed that the source of his information was a recent business clerk of the Society. Burnet denied the truth of the statements and promised a full investigation and report at the Convention in October. Both sides agreed to suspend the discussion until after the report.[82]

The same issue of the Harbinger which contained a report of the meeting between Burnet and Pendleton also contained an article by Alexander Campbell on "The Christian Publication Society."[83] Campbell concluded that the Brotherhood had no organized Publication Society because: (1) delegates from the churches were never elected to establish such an institution; (2) the churches had never offered such a project; and (3) no annual meeting of a

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[81] William K. Pendleton and David S. Burnet, "Harbinger and Publication Society," Millennial Harbinger, Series IV, IV (Aug., 1854), 453.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Millennial Harbinger, Series IV, IV (Aug., 1854), 469-472.

District could scripturally ordain and establish such an institution in behalf of all the churches.[84] He felt the church was not to do its work through commercial firms, or companies in trade, or through book concerns. Campbell further added that he could not countenance any association or public institution called Christian that was not originated, managed, sustained, and controlled by messengers of the churches.

The vehemence of the Harbinger's opposition to the Society brought charges of conflict of interest. Campbell replied:

> An effort has been made to create the impression we have a temporal or secular interest in the American Christian Publication Society's bad handling of the situation. Our own efforts have been as beneficial to the brotherhood as the American Christian Publication Society. We have asked for no donation, accepted no money, and propose to continue our own Publication Society and will throw no impediment against any other.[85]

In October, the month of the Convention, Campbell again alluded to the Publication Society in an article on "The Missionary Cause."[86] Here he rose to new heights of denunciation, even for him. He characterized the Publication Society as "our most expensive, our least profitable, and our least defensible institution."[87] He accused it of secularizing the churches and called the proposed distribution of profits to widows and superannuated preachers indirect taxation. He wrote:

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[84] Ibid., p. 470.

[85] "The Christian Publication Society," Millennial Harbinger, Series IV, IV (Sept., 1854), 531.

[86] Millennial Harbinger, Series IV, IV (Oct., 1854), 541-549.

> This publication manufactury, store, or establishment, is not only a fungous excrescence upon our system, but also an onerous tax upon the generosity of our brethren.[88]

Meanwhile at Cincinnati the Society met for its Seventh Annual Convention, and David Burnet, according to his prior agreement with Pendleton, moved that a committee of five be appointed to investigate the charges which had appeared in the Harbinger and which were calculated to unsettle the confidence of the brotherhood in the Society. President B. S. Lawson appointed John Rogers and S. W. Irvin of Kentucky, Elijah Goodwin and L. H. Jameson of Indiana, and A. E. Strikle of Ohio as the Committee of Investigation.[89]

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[87] Ibid., p. 544.

[88] Ibid., p. 545.

[89] Report of the Proceedings of the Convention of the Churches of Christ, at the Anniversaries of the American Christian, Bible, Missionary, and Publication Societies: Held in Cincinnati, October 17th, 18th, 19th, and 20th, 1854 (Cincinnati: American Christian Publication Society, 1854), p. 59.

The committee reported no just grounds to question either the ability or the integrity of the managers of the Publication Society. In short, Pendleton's charges were labeled entirely false. The books of John Boggs, Pendleton's source of information and a former secretary of the Society, showed that the Publication Society owed the Missionary Society $306.37, most of which was assumed by its agent to pay the Missionary Society at the request of Alexander Campbell! According to the investigation, Campbell had owed these funds to the Missionary Society, having received them from subscribers, and the agent of the Publication Society accepted the funds from Campbell and assumed the obligation on behalf of the Publication Society. In addition to this, George Tait, treasurer of the Missionary Society, certified that he once loaned $400 to the business committee of the Publication Society, taking the note of one of them as security. It was an ordinary business transaction, and no missionary funds were removed.[90] While the investigation disclosed the error of Pendleton's charges, it was true that the Publication Society was in financial trouble. It had never received much support from the churches, and the assumption of the Christian Age proved a great financial burden.

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[90] Report of the Proceedings, 1854, p. 62.

In the next issue of the Harbinger, Pendleton asserted that John Boggs had made the charges against the Publication Society and that the Harbinger had simply published them. Anyhow, wrote Pendleton, the Society had not proved them false.[91] Some criticized Pendleton's censure of the Publication Society as a matter of private offense and commended the rule in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew. Pendleton replied: "The same course, we remember, was taken by similar counsellors when the Harbinger was animadverting on the Universalism of J. B. Ferguson."[92]

Pendleton regretted the manner in which the committee of five made its report. He claimed that the Publication Society owed Alexander Campbell, so it assumed the debt Campbell owed the Missionary Society as a convenient way of paying Campbell.[93] He then went on to write:

> Should this Society succeed in its purposes, perhaps we shall be more inclined to consider its desserts when we begin to be saddled with a creed, in the form of an authorized literature, and feel ourselves trammeled in our religious

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[91] "The Christian Publication Society," Millennial Harbinger, Series IV, IV (Nov., 1854), 625.

[92] See Chapter II.

[93] "The Anniversaries of Our Societies," Millennial Harbinger, Series IV, V (Jan., 1855), 45.

> freedom by the *formulae* of the Publication Society theology![94]

In the same issue, the *Harbinger* contained a letter from a reader in Texas opposing a church paper for the following reasons: (1) the editor's opinion goes out as that of the whole church; (2) it is the beginning of a creed--a systematic form of church government; and (3) it is a monopoly, destroying independence.[95]

By October of 1856 the Publication Society had reached the end of its rope. The opposition of the *Harbinger* was not alone responsible. The *Age* and the *Journal* had lost money. In assuming the obligations from Jethro Jackson, the Society had assumed responsibility for a large number of prepaid subscriptions and a swollen subscription list. Between five and six thousand dollars were lost in this way.[96] The churches had never responded to the vision of the Publication Society with financial support, and there was a general fear of any kind of organization. Perhaps the letter from the Texas reader, cited above, expressed the general feeling about a Publication Society in the 1850's. The Publication Society was suspended, and both it and the Bible Society were merged into the American Christian Missionary Society in 1856.[97] The Sunday School Library was committed to the care of David S. Burnet,[98] the Depository fixtures were given to the church in Cincinnati in lieu of back rent,[99] and the periodicals were sold to H. S. Bosworth. The American Christian Missionary Society voted to receive the assets of the Publication Society.[100]

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[94] *Ibid.*, p. 51.

[95] "A Church Paper," *Millennial Harbinger*, Series IV, V (Jan., 1855), 52.

[96] *Report of the Proceedings, 1856*, p. 16.

Thus ended a genuine, but ill-fated, attempt to establish a brotherhood publishing house in the 1850's. Its failure meant that the Disciples would have to continue relying on individual, personal journalism, for better or for worse, until 1910 when the Christian Board of Publication was finally to be established. Campbell noted the demise of the Society with tranquil satisfaction:

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[97] _Ibid._, p. 7.

[98] _Ibid._, p. 15. The _Christian Sentinel_, IV (Sept., 1857), 288 noted: "The library which Bro. D. S. Burnet has for years been editing is at last completed, stereotyped, and issued. There are fifty volumes in all, which will be furnished for $8. Of the merits of them we cannot speak advisedly, not yet having received specimens. Bro. Burnet's name, however, is a guaranty of their value. J. B. Lippincott & Co., Philadelphia, are the publishers."

[99] _Report of the Proceedings, 1856_, p. 15.

[100] _Ibid._, p. 16.

> The Bible Society and the Publication Society were dissolved with great unanimity, and the Missionary Society made, what it ought to be, the central point of our concentrated activity and liberality as a people.[101]

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[101] "Our Anniversaries in Cincinnati," Millennial Harbinger, Series IV, VI (Dec., 1856), 714.

CHAPTER II

A CASE STUDY IN MINISTERIAL DISCIPLINE

The Problem

Charles Louis Loos, a prominent Disciple leader, wrote in 1901:

> Those still among us, old enough, may remember that by 1840, the result of the teaching of our stronger men, notably in the Millennial Harbinger, on the questions of "Organization, Co-operation and Edification:" i.e. the closer alliance of the churches for efficient co-operation in general evangelization, Sunday-Schools, proper pastoral work and discipline in the churches, the creation of a larger efficient ministry of the Word, and the control of the free itinerant ministers . . . guided the people and illuminated their path in all important movements.[1]

One of the most vexing problems the Disciples faced was the problem of ministerial discipline or responsibility. Lack of an authoritative ecclesiastical structure beyond the local congregation complicated the problem.[2] The rod of discipline fell to the lot of the editors by default. Certainly Alexander Campbell exercised a tremendous influence through the pages of the Millennial Harbinger. As Loos indicated, one of the influences of the Harbinger was in the direction of ministerial discipline--a particularly pressing issue when the Disciples had passed the initial stage of their growth and become, as they did in the 1840's and 1850's, more interested in the consolidation and coordination of the movement.

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[1] Charles Louis Loos, "Introductory Period," The Reformation of the Nineteenth Century, ed. J. H. Garrison (St. Louis: Christian Publishing Co., 1901), p. 102.

[2] See Chapter I.

An example of Campbell's use of the Harbinger as an instrument of ministerial discipline is found in his controversy with Jesse B. Ferguson, minister of the church at Nashville and editor of the Christian Magazine. In the April issue of the Christian Magazine for the year 1852, Ferguson published his interpretation of I Peter 3:18-20 and 4:1-6, in an article entitled "The Spirits in Prison."[3] Campbell reprinted this article in the June 1852 issue of the Millennial Harbinger and roundly condemned the viewpoint expressed by Ferguson.[4] The controversy between the two continued to wax hotter and hotter in the pages of their respective periodicals and eventually resulted in Ferguson's resignation from his church and separation from the Disciples of Christ.

This controversy raises several questions. Was Campbell exercising undue authority over a fellow minister?

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[3] Christian Magazine, V (April, 1852), 113.

[4] "A New Discovery," Millennial Harbinger, Series IV, II (June, 1852), 313.

Did he use the Harbinger as an organ in ministerial discipline in a way that violated the principle of congregational autonomy? Was the viewpoint condemned by Campbell in the realm of essential faith or the realm of private opinion? And finally, was a minister of the Disciples to be left free to publish and preach any doctrine without being responsible for some kind of orthodoxy? The hope of shedding some light on these questions prompts a close examination of the controversy.

The Personal History of J. B. Ferguson

Jesse Babcock Ferguson was born in Philadelphia on January 19, 1819.[5] He planned to attend William and Mary College, but his father's financial reverses made this impossible. At the age of fourteen he was apprenticed to a printer in Winchester, Virginia.[6] While still a youth, he was afflicted with a kind of swelling that left him a cripple for the remainder of his life.[7] Ferguson moved to Ohio as early as 1838, and that year marks the first record of his activity as a preacher of the Disciples. A letter from him dated October 27, 1838, appeared in the Millennial Harbinger. In this letter he spoke of some conversions at a meeting which he held, and he added: "If the brethren would avoid 'foolish questions' and attend to the living oracles, truth must and will prevail."[8] At this time, he was only nineteen years old.

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[5] Enos E. Dowling, An Analysis and Index of the Christian Magazine (Lincoln: Lincoln Bible Institute Press, 1958), p. 1. Hereafter referred to as An Analysis and Index.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid., p. 2.

Ferguson's success as a preacher was remarkable. While he was still a resident of Ohio he engaged in at least two debates in the defense of Reformation principles, one of which resulted in his opponent's leaving the Methodist ministry and joining the Christian Church.[9] After his marriage to the daughter of James Mark, Ferguson moved to Todd County, Kentucky, where he resided from 1842 until March 1847, at which time he accepted the pastorate of the Nashville Church.[10] While in Kentucky Ferguson's fame as preacher spread far and wide.[11] He was an exceptionally captivating and convincing pulpiteer, and he enjoyed tremendous success as an evangelist among the churches of Todd, Logan, Christian, and Trigg Counties in Kentucky and among the churches of Middle Tennessee.[12]

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[8] Millennial Harbinger, New Series, III (Nov., 1839), 192.

[9] Dowling, An Analysis and Index, p. 4.

[10] Jesse B. Ferguson, History of the Relation of the Pastor to the Christian Church of Nashville (Nashville: M'Kennie & Brown, Printers, 1855), p. 3. Hereafter referred to as History of the Relation.

[11] Earl Irvin West, The Search for the Ancient Order, I (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1949), p. 261.

In May 1842 Ferguson held a meeting in Nashville. From his first association with the congregation there he captivated the people of the church and of the community. Dr. Wharton, a Nashville physician who had been serving as preacher to the church, gave him a hearty welcome and earnestly solicited a return engagement. In 1844 Ferguson held another meeting for the Nashville congregation, and from that time he constantly received letters from the congregation urging that he accept the pastorate of the church. This was also the desire of Dr. Wharton.[13] At first Ferguson refused, but the urgings of the Nashville congregation were so repeated and so insistent that he finally consented, in 1846, to serve the church half-time. In March 1847 he began to serve the church full-time, and accordingly he moved with his family to Nashville.[14]

Ferguson's popularity in Nashville was immediate and phenomenal. Though less than thirty years of age and possessing a somewhat sketchy formal education, he was a gentleman of polished manners, fascinating personality, and remarkable eloquence.[15] Even those who later disapproved of his doctrines declared that "never was a man so honored and caressed by the Disciples of Christ in the South and West."[16]

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[12] "News from the Churches," Millennial Harbinger, New Series, VII (Oct., 1843), 474, 475.

[13] Ferguson, History of the Relation, p. 3.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

> His followers were not confined to the members of his church. His appeal was universal and tramps, street-walkers, gamblers, and the worldly-minded sat spellbound by his oratory. With a combination of personality and well-chosen words he was able to weave a sermonic web that caught the dregs of society as well as the social butterflies.[17]

In February of 1847 Alexander Campbell complimented the church at Nashville on its Sunday School and printed a communication from Ferguson indicating that the church had at that time over five hundred members.[18]

In January 1848 Ferguson began publication of the

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[15] Robert Richardson, Memoirs of Alexander Campbell, II (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1870), 603.

[16] F. Garvin Davenport, Cultural Life in Nashville, 1825-1880 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1941), p. 101. Hereafter referred to as Cultural Life in Nashville.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Alexander Campbell, "Every Church Ought to Have Its Sunday School," Millennial Harbinger, Series III, IV (April, 1847), 202-204.

Christian Magazine. Announcing the new periodical, Campbell wrote:

> From the very respectable talents and acquirements; and still more especially from the practical good sense and Christian courtesy of brother Jesse B. Ferguson . . . we expect for it a liberal patronage and a useful career in the dissemination of Christian intelligence amongst the community.[19]

Ferguson's first venture into the editorial ranks had been in association with Arthur Crihfield in the conduct of the Heretic Detector in 1841.[20] He had also been a regular contributor to Tolbert Fanning's Christian Review, the predecessor of the Christian Magazine.[21] With the intermittent editorial help of Fanning, B. F. Hall, John Eichbaum, and John R. Howard, Ferguson continued to edit the Christian Magazine until it was discontinued in December 1853. Under Ferguson the editorial policy of the Christian Magazine in terms of doctrinal emphasis was, in all areas except the eschatalogical, well within the generally accepted pattern of the Reformation.[22] The periodical was capably edited, and it enjoyed a very readable typographical format and was well received by its constituency. It pleasantly surprised the editor by paying for itself the first year.[23] Its circulation, probably never more than 2,000, included Tennessee, Kentucky, Virginia, Alabama, Mississippi, Missouri, Arkansas, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Iowa, Ohio, Indiana, Oregon, Texas, North and South Carolina, Georgia, and perhaps a few subscribers in other states.[24] Volumes III through V (1850-1852) were published as the property of the Christian Publication Society of Tennessee. As the organ of the Disciples in Tennessee, it was supervised by a publication committee which reported to the Annual Meetings of the State Co-operation.[25] Ferguson resigned as editor at the close of 1852, but the State Co-operation, unable to secure another editor, turned the periodical over to him to publish as an independent journal.[26]

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[19] "Notice," Millennial Harbinger, Series III, IV (Dec., 1847), 718.

[20] Dowling, An Analysis and Index, p. 8.

[21] Ibid., p. 9.

[22] See Dowling, pp. 86-98 for an exhaustive study of the editorial policy of the Christian Magazine.

Ferguson's success and popularity as an editor and a preacher brought him many responsibilities. In May 1852 he apologized with these words for not being able to answer all his correspondence:

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[23] *Ibid.*, p. 47.

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 48.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 49.

[26] M. C. C. Church, "The Christian Magazine,"

> It should be remembered that we deliver, upon an average, four original discourses every week. Two of these are delivered to a crowded audience composed of some of the most inquiring, intelligent, and respectable portions of our citizens. That we perform the duty of Pastor in a Church of nearly six hundred members and that we have sought to visit nearly two hundred families in the church and congregation at least once every three months, and oftener during seasons of affliction; and all this in a city and neighborhood scattered over an unusually large territory. That every benevolent society in the city and many literary ones in it and the surrounding villages, have claims upon us for addresses, &c., which cannot be well set aside. Add to these the responsibilities of a large family, and remember the amount of time required to receive visitors and give attention to strangers, together with the claims upon our correspondence from churches, raised up and served in other sections of the country, kindred, and personal friends--and you will have some view of the duties that press upon the editor of this Magazine. Then the duties of nearly all our agencies for the spread of the cause in the state have been forced upon us; and duties of eloomosinary [sic] office held from the State, such as trustee of the Lunatic Asylum, &c., &c., and you will be willing to admit that we eat no idle bread.[27]

Such laments were an editor's traditional prerogative, but the list of duties, which was boastful but not exaggerated, testified to Ferguson's position in the church and in the

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Christian Magazine, V (Dec., 1852), 364.

[27] "An Editor's Duties," Christian Magazine, V (May, 1852), 159.

community.

Ferguson's preaching drew such large crowds to the Christian Church that the building could no longer hold them by 1852. In May of that year a new church building, erected on Cherry Street at a cost of approximately $30,000, was dedicated. The Nashville Daily Union, the Gazette, and the Memphis Express all extolled the beauty of the new building and the capability of Ferguson. The crowd which attended the dedication was so large that the building would not contain it, though it had one hundred and fifty pews.[28]

From the foregoing it should be evident that by 1852 Ferguson, though only thirty-two years of age, was an eminently successful and valuable leader of the Disciples in Tennessee and, indeed, in the entire South and West. Eloquent preacher, able editor, and conscientious civic leader, his star was at its zenith, and no one questioned either his piety or his devotion to Restoration principles. Perhaps one reason for the universal regard in which he was held was his amiable character. The pages of the Christian Magazine exhibit none of that love of controversy which was an integral part of the stock in trade of so many contemporary religious periodicals. Maintaining and justifying the noncontroversial character of the Christian Magazine was a matter of great concern to the editor. In July 1850 he wrote: "I fear the invasion of church independence, but not from Co-operation meetings, or Conventions properly convened, but from the invasion of church rights by our periodicals."[29] "There shall be no personal war in our magazine," Ferguson wrote in February 1849.[30] And for some four and one-half years, he steadfastly adhered to this policy. It is ironic that during the next year and a half, his periodical became the medium for one of the most controversial personal wars in Disciples history to that date--a war touched off by Ferguson's exposition of a passage from the New Testament.

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[28] Jesse B. Ferguson, "Opening Our New House of Worship," Christian Magazine, V (Aug., 1852), 237-239.

The Controversy Over Freedom of Opinion In Scriptural Interpretation

Ferguson undertook, in the April 1852 issue of the Christian Magazine, an exposition of I Peter 3: 18-20 and 4:1-6 at the request of numerous correspondents. He apparently approached the task with some diffidence, admitting that his view differed entirely from that held by the majority of the brethren and by a majority of Protestant interpreters. Because of the novelty of his position he "hesitated long in its public expression, hoping to be able to see something more clear, consistent and satisfactory."[31] He then explained further:

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[29] Christian Magazine, III (July, 1850), 209. Quoted in Dowling, An Analysis and Index, p. 237.

[30] Dowling, An Analysis and Index, p. 238.

> . . . having read most expositions of ancient and modern critics and commentators, we submit the following translation, paraphrase and remarks with becoming modesty, we trust, and with due deference to the contrary views of Brethren and authors we profoundly respect.[32]

The text he submitted to his readers was:

> It is better to suffer, doing well, (if the will of God be so,) than doing evil, because even Christ once suffered about sins, the just over the unjust, to bring us near to God; put to death indeed in consequence of flesh, but made alive in consequence of the Spirit, in which Spirit, also, he went and preached to the Spirits now in prison, to those once rebellious when the long suffering of God waited out in Noah's days, while the Ark was being prepared, entering into which a few, that is eight souls were brought safely through the waters: corresponding to which Baptism also now saves us, (not putting off the filth of the flesh, but the asking of a good conscience after God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven, angels and powers being arraigned under him. Christ, then, having suffered over us in consequence of flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, (for he that has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,) that you no longer live the remaining time in the flesh

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[31] "Exposition of Scrupture," *Christian Magazine*, V (April, 1852), 113.

[32] *Ibid*.

> after the lusts of men but after the will of God. For the time past is sufficient to have wrought the will of the Gentiles when you walked in excesses, lusts, revellings, and lawless idolatries. On which account they stand astonished--that you no longer run into the same profligate dissoluteness,--mocking you--who shall pay their reckoning to him that is ready to judge the living and the dead, that they might be judged like men in the flesh, yet live after God in the Spirit.[33]

From this passage, which Ferguson's rendering made even more confusing than usual, Ferguson reached the following position:

1. Christ, by his Spirit, preached to the Spirits of the invisible world, which refers to all the dead, at the period of time between his death and his resurrection. This is afterward confirmed by the declaration "that in order that Jesus Christ might be the judge of the dead and the living, the 'gospel' was preached to the dead--to those now dead--not 'in the flesh' but 'now in prison'."[34]
2. The dead in this passage are not to be defined as morally or spiritually dead but are contrasted to "those in the flesh." They are the spirits in prison, and are connected with the spiritual principalities and powers, which are under Christ, as are the living.
3. Christ died to reconcile not only things on earth but also things in heaven. The breadth and depth and heighth of God's love is placed beyond all measure of all earthly, selfish, and sinful understanding.[35]

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[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid., p. 113 ff.

Ferguson wrote:

> From our souls we pity the spiritual darkness of any man or sect of men whose earthly and selfish views limit the benefits of the mission of Christ to the comparatively few who hear of him and learn his ways while they remain in the flesh. Infants, idiots, pagans, and the countless thousands whose external circumstances remove them far from the blessed light of the gospel as it shines through earthen mirrors, are thus consigned to a perdition revolting to every just conception of God, or Christ, or the benevolent purposes of life . . . We never commit the body of a single human being to the grave, for whom it is not a pleasure for us to know, that his soul has already entered where the knowledge of Christ may yet be his; and that if at last condemned, it will not be for any thing that was unavoidable in his outward circumstances on earth.[36]

Ferguson went on to add that he expected the happiness of the invisible world to consist, for the saints, in giving knowledge of the Savior to all who might have the capacity to receive it. He concluded by recognizing the difficulties of the passage and the novelty of his view, but he stated that his view ought not to be rejected merely because of its novelty, and if rejected "the doctrine of Christ's death and triumph, extending its beneficial influences over the invisible world, as the teaching of the holy scriptures, is not thereby invalidated."[37]

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[36] Ibid., p. 115.

[37] Ibid.

The next mention of this subject in print occurred in the pages of the Millennial Harbinger of June 1852. Alexander Campbell reprinted Ferguson's article under the heading "A New Discovery" and appended fourteen pages of detailed analysis and condemnation of the views Ferguson had expressed in "The Spirits in Prison."

Campbell began by noting: "Many a theological telescope has been directed at this imaginary constellation in the ecclesiastical or theological heavens."[38] He wrote that many of the brethren had called his attention to the article since it, in their judgment, had an anti-evangelical tendency and was of no value to any human being. Campbell's critical attack on the article was along these lines:

1. Men of the world will, while "shuffling off this mortal coil," flatter themselves that they are yet to hear a posthumous gospel, to be preached to all who die in their sins. This will operate against their repenting, and thus is anti-evangelical.[39]
2. This "post mortem" gospel will be of sight, not faith, since anyone in Hades will be only too glad to get out. It will be a large congregation, a short sermon, and a universal conversion. (It should be noted that Campbell either failed or refused to recognize that

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[38] Millennial Harbinger, Series IV, II (June, 1852), 316.

[39] For reference to the specific points of Campbell's criticism, see Millennial Harbinger, Series IV, II (June, 1852), pp. 313-329.

Ferguson assumed the gospel would be preached in a "post mortem" world only to those who had no prior opportunity to hear it.)

3. Christ indeed reconciles heaven, but not hades.
4. Ferguson's version of the text is borrowed from "brainless and heartless" translators who do away with the sacrificial death of Christ.
5. Ferguson was young and would be well advised to shun new things.
6. Ferguson indulged his imagination at the expense of truth.

Campbell felt that Ferguson's view tended to neutralize the gospel by impairing its sanctions, thus weakening the efforts of those who teach sinners that unless they repent they will surely perish. According to Campbell, hypocrisy and trifling would be the characteristics of one who would hold this idea and tell men they would not perish unless they repented. This speculation, wrote Campbell, undermines the whole foundation of the gospel--the strongest argument for obeying it--"unless you repent, you shall perish."

Having disposed of Ferguson's exposition of the passages as heretical, hypocritical, and Universalist, Campbell went on to give his own exegesis of the passages, one which he had held for several years and, although he did not know it then, one which several "very learned and able commentators [sustain]."[40]

According to Campbell the Spirits in prison were preached to by Noah, speaking through the Holy Spirit, which is and ever was, dispensed officially by the Word, which became flesh and dwelt among us.[41] The "prison" is a confinement of time (one hundred and twenty years) and not of space. The same Jesus, as the Word of God, before his incarnation, went in the person of Noah, by the Spirit, to preach to those antediluvians who were doomed to destruction unless they repented. Their bounds were "while the Ark was preparing"; the whole prison bounds being one hundred and twenty years. Such are the facts, wrote Campbell, and such are the oracles of God pertaining to them. There was never any preaching to disembodied Spirits.

It is interesting to note that of the two radically different interpretations of the verses involved, the interpretation of Ferguson's (though not the inferences he drew from it) was the nearer to the one generally accepted today.[42]

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[40] "A New Discovery," Millennial Harbinger, Series IV, II (June, 1852), 323.

[41] Ibid., p. 322.

[42] Archibald M. Hunter, "Exegesis of I Peter," Interpreter's Bible, XII (Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1957), pp. 132, 133, 137. Hunter says the simplest meaning of this passage is that Christ descended between

From the spring of 1852 until October 1853 the positions of both Ferguson and Campbell remained unchanged. Copious charges and counter-charges, which will be cited later, were issued by both men. Meanwhile, for the sake of clarity, the positions of the two may be summed up briefly as follows: In his treatment of the controversial passages, Ferguson affirmed that Christ, in the period between his death and his resurrection went, in the Spirit, and preached to the dead, that is those no longer "in the flesh" who, because they had died before Christ's advent had no previous opportunity to hear the gospel. Ferguson felt they must hear it, since God would not condemn men for not responding to a gospel they had, through no fault of their own, never heard. Ferguson deduced from this that all men who had never had an opportunity to hear and respond to the gospel would have that opportunity at some time. He put this forward as his own personal opinion, admitting its novelty. Campbell objected, on the grounds that no man who had the opportunity to hear the gospel posthumously would reject it. Therefore, it sounded like another form of Universalism to him and he regarded it as an opinion that would undermine the very basis of the gospel--

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his passion and resurrection to preach to those who died before his advent in order that they might have a chance of full and final salvation.

unless one repents, he shall perish. Thus, for Campbell, Ferguson was voicing his opinion on an essential of the faith, and not a non-essential. Further, Campbell maintained Ferguson's exegesis was wrong. The true meaning of the passages referred to Noah's preaching to his contemporaries, not to Christ's preaching to disembodied spirits.

In the July issue of the Harbinger Campbell continued his attack on Ferguson, remarking on the dangers of an unlicensed press and the calamity of having "children for leaders and babes for rulers."[43] He demanded an apology from Ferguson to the whole brotherhood for the presentation of Christian missions in terms of visiting regions of the damned, to convert and bring them thence to heaven. This he regarded as an offense against truth and good morals spread over the whole community to the mortification of the brotherhood. If, wrote Campbell, this was Ferguson's settled judgment, it ought to be known and publically reprobated. If it were an impulse of an exuberant and wild imagination, "it ought to be confessed, retracted, and forgiven."[44] He also reprinted a letter from one Brother Church of Pittsburg, saying Ferguson "has got a maggot in his brain" and calling his doctrine a "damnable heresy."[45] A letter from John Rogers, in less offensive language, expressed regret at Ferguson's "dangerous aberration" and commended Campbell for his exposé.[46]

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[43] "The Christian Magazine.-No. 1," Millennial Harbinger, Series IV, II (July, 1852), 390.

[44] Ibid., p. 398.

In the July issue of the Christian Magazine Ferguson wrote in general terms without mentioning any names or articles. He expressed himself against "heresy hunters" and men "enslaved to their own opinions and prejudices."[47] No mention of Alexander Campbell or "The Spirits in Prison" appeared in the columns of the Christian Magazine until August 1852 when Ferguson reprinted an extremely critical letter from P. L. Townes, Muhlenburg County, Kentucky.[48] In that issue he also wrote a reply to Campbell. After referring to the vehemence of Campbell's attack, Ferguson pointed out that the inferences Campbell drew from the article were, in his opinion, without foundation. He denied any affinity with Universalism and wondered in print "if Campbell desired to find some ground of complaint . . . or wished to prove [him] heretical."[49] Ferguson concluded with a plea for peace and a cessation of the controversy, but he refused to apologize for the opinion expressed in the article. The September issue of the Christian Magazine contained a further defense.[50] Ferguson wrote: "The case is as plain a one as has recently been registered in the history of human assumption over the right of private judgment and freedom of opinion."[51]

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[45] "The Spirits in Prison," Millennial Harbinger, Series IV, II (July, 1852), 414.

[46] Ibid. Rogers considered Ferguson lost in "the dismal swamps and quagmires of . . . spiritualism." See John Rogers, The Biography of Elder J. T. Johnson (Cincinnati: Published for the author, 1861), p. 316.

[47] "Excerpts of Things New and Old," Christian Magazine, V (July, 1852), 209, 210.

[48] "Spirits in Prison," Christian Magazine, V (Aug., 1852), 225.

Ferguson felt that Campbell should have made a private inquiry for an explanation or, if he thought the truth required a public explanation, should have asked for one through the Harbinger or the Magazine; and finally, if he could not reconcile his conscience to pursue this fraternal course, Campbell should have reviewed the article in question and confined himself to a review of the exposition.[52] Campbell called on Ferguson to reprint his

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[49] "The Attack of the 'Millennial Harbinger' Upon the 'Christian Magazine' and Its Editor," Christian Magazine, V (Aug., 1852), 241.

[50] Jesse B. Ferguson, "Rewards and Punishments of the Future Life, &c.," Christian Magazine, V (Sept., 1852), 264 and "The Attacks of the Millennial Harbinger Continued," Christian Magazine, V (Sept., 1852), 274.

[51] Ibid., p. 274.

[52] Ibid.

(Campbell's) remarks in the Christian Magazine, and Ferguson at first refused on the ground that the issue was a personal one. Under the increasing pressure of the controversy, however, Ferguson consented to reprint the whole affair, from both sides, in an extra issue of the Christian Magazine. This was published in December 1852.

In this extra issue Ferguson quoted from Campbell's remarks in a previous controversy, when Campbell himself was under attack from another editor:

> I contend that no Editor of this Reformation has a right Scriptural or by covenant, to prefer any charge upon its pages in the least implicating the moral excellence or purity of a brother. . . . I do not recognize the tribunal before which I am arraigned, as one constituted or authorized by our Lawgiver and Judge. I am a member of the Church of Christ, at Bethany, Va., and a law-abiding citizen of the Messiah's kingdom. To that tribunal I am amenable.[53]

Ferguson adopted the same defense, maintaining that his accountability was to the brethren in Tennessee as an editor and to the Church of Christ at Nashville as a pastor, and not to Alexander Campbell as anything. It made a difference whose ox was being gored.

While Campbell was condemning Ferguson's position and reprinting letters condemning Ferguson from John T.

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[53] "Rights of Christian Editors, as Defined by A. Campbell, A. D. 1840," Christian Magazine, Extra (Dec., 1852), 26.

Johnson,[54] Samuel Church,[55] and Ferguson's assistant editor, John R. Howard,[56] what was the opinion of the State Co-Operation in Tennessee and the church at Nashville? The State Co-operation, convened in Paris, Tennessee, in December 1852. Ferguson was present as a delegate from the Nashville church, and he played an active role in the deliberations.[57] He was elected a director and vice-president of the Co-operation for the coming year (1853).[58] He tendered his resignation as editor of the Christian Magazine, and on the motion of Tolbert Fanning, it was resolved that the thanks of the Co-operation be tendered to Ferguson for his "arduous and gratuitous labors in conducting the Christian Magazine."[59]

As for the church in Nashville, it continued to grow and to support its minister. At the beginning of 1853 there was some slight objection offered to Ferguson's continuation as pastor, and he offered to resign. The church would not allow him to do so, and only two members voted against keeping him.[60] The congregation gave him three votes of confidence in the face of the attacks which continued through 1853 and, toward the end of the year, discontented with the position of the majority, a minority of about twenty-five members withdrew to form another congregation.[61] The majority of the congregation remained loyal supporters of their minister and had every confidence in him.

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[54] John T. Johnson, "The Last Letter on the Spirits in Prison," Millennial Harbinger, Series IV, II (Aug., 1852), 469.

[55] Samuel Church, "The Attack of the Millennial Harbinger on the Christian Magazine," Millennial Harbinger, Series IV, II (Sept., 1852), 505.

[56] John R. Howard, "John R. Howard's Protest Against the New Theology," Millennial Harbinger, Series IV, II (Dec., 1852), 683.

[57] "Minutes of the Tennessee Co-operation for 1852," Christian Magazine, V (Dec., 1852), 359.

[58] Ibid., p. 360.

[59] Ibid.

Thus the situation stood toward the end of 1853. Following Campbell's lead, many Disciples editors and preachers were extremely critical of Ferguson's position as revealed in "The Spirits in Prison," regarding it as heretical and dangerous to the faith. No charge was brought, from any quarter, against Ferguson's orthodoxy other than this crucial article. On his part Ferguson maintained that his opinion as expressed in the article, while novel, was not grounds for a charge of heresy nor was it detrimental to the faith. In this position he was upheld by his congregation and, at least by inference, by the Tennessee State Co-operation. The extent of the interest in the issue and the feeling against him outside of Nashville and Tennessee, however, was tremendous.

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[60] Ferguson, History of the Relation, p. 4.

[61] Ibid., p. 5.

At a Co-operation meeting in Southern Kentucky a resolution dissenting from Ferguson's view of the future world was proposed, but it failed to pass.[62] The Elders of the church at Hopkinsville, Kentucky, refused to allow him to preach in the church there, though he had done so many times in the past. Throughout 1854 the pages of the Millennial Harbinger continued in unremitting condemnation of Ferguson, the main theme being that he was a Universalist. In November 1854 a short notice appeared in the Harbinger in which Alexander Campbell announced his resolve to visit Nashville "in obedience to many very urgent calls."[63] Meanwhile, something had taken place which altered the nature of the controversy entirely.

In October 1853 Ferguson became a Spiritualist.[64] From 1849 through September 1853 Ferguson was aware of the popular "spirit-rapping" but dismissed these manifestations "as the minglings of fanaticism and imposture."[65] However, he found himself fascinated by the relations of the spirit realm. Determined to investigate Spiritualism as such, he was "urged on more of hope than fear, seeing that sectarian bigotry ever ready to denounce all truth in the incipient stages of its recognition, had uttered its weak and foolish bull against 'Spirit-rapping.'"[66]

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[62] Jesse B. Ferguson, "Proposed Action Respecting Our Views," Christian Magazine, Extra (Dec., 1852), 27.

[63] Millennial Harbinger, Series IV, IV (Nov., 1854), 660.

[64] Jesse B. Ferguson, Spirit Communion: A Record of Communication from the Spirit-Spheres (Nashville: Union and American Steam Press, 1854), p. 15.

Ferguson was in Ohio in October 1853 "to secure the privilege of personal observation of these strange phenomena."[68] He discovered that his wife was a medium, and from then on Ferguson claimed to be in frequent consultation with the spirits of the departed. Dr. William Ellery Channing was one of the most accessible spirits with whom he purportedly had contact.[68]

In 1854 Ferguson published a pamphlet in which he defended one's right to be a Unitarian, a Universalist, or a Spiritualist and still have the fellowship of Christians. He wrote:

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[65] Ibid., p. 12.

[66] Ibid., p. 13.

[67] Ibid., p. 15.

[68] Ibid., p. 124.

> Now I know it will be said, and justly said, that the preachers of the so-called Reformation do not believe with you. How then can we expect their fellowship? I do not expect it, but did expect it because our fellowship was not predicated upon a vain uniformity of belief. . . . Church fellowship in uniformity of belief is an impossibility. It never did exist and never can exist.[69]

The Result of the Controversy

It is apparent that by 1854 Ferguson was out of contact entirely with the generally accepted Disciple position. A change had occurred in his attitude toward Spiritualism and, consequently, toward the sufficiency of the revelation of God as contained in the Scriptures.[70] This is not to say that there were no indications in his previous writings of a tendency in this direction.[71] Yet these writings, widely read, produced no criticisms or accusations that he might be a Spiritualist. Why did Ferguson become a Spiritualist? Would a more generous course--a kindlier attitude on the part of Campbell--have saved him for a continuing and useful ministry in the Disciples Church? In attempting to answer this question, one is tempted to reply affirmatively by two factors: (1) Ferguson's own admission that he determined to investigate Spiritualism because of sectarian bigotry and narrowness;[72] and (2) the earlier case of Aylette Rains. According to Rains, Campbell and others in 1828 considered his Universalist sentiments a vagary of the brain, but they treated him with firmness and kindness and encouraged him to persevere in the Christian faith.[73] Rains later wrote:

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[69] Jesse B. Ferguson, Relation of Pastor and People: Statement of Belief on Unitarianism, Universalism, and Spiritualism (Nashville: Union and American Steam Press, 1854), p. 14.

[70] Dowling, An Analysis and Index, p. 13.

[71] See Jesse B. Ferguson, "Ministry of Angels," Divine Illumination (Nashville: J. F. Morgan, Fine Job and Book Printer, 1855), p. 20 for a discussion of this tendency in his earlier writings.

> Had they pursued with me the opposite course, I awfully fear that I might have made shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, and become a castaway. Whereas, under the kind treatment I received from the chief men of the Restoration, and the increased means of religious knowledge, to which I obtained access after I left the Universalists, I grew in grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ with such rapidity that in twelve months or less time, restorationism had wholly faded out of my mind.[74]

There is certainly room for speculation that if Campbell had dealt differently with Ferguson and had not kept up the public controversy, which was repugnant to

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[72] Ferguson, Spirit Communion, p. 15.

[73] Dowling, An Analysis and Index, p. 229.

[74] Ibid.

Ferguson from the beginning, this man would not have been lost to the Disciples. As the most influential editor among the Disciples, Campbell exercised a needed function in the area of ministerial discipline, but his manner and approach indicate that the Disciples would have been better served if this important function had not been in the hands of one man. The change in Campbell's attitude between 1828 and 1852 was probably a reflection of the fact that by the 1850's the Disciples were no longer a new movement but had moved into a phase of conservation and consolidation.

Once he had embraced Spiritualism, Ferguson's end as a Disciples pastor was sure to come. Campbell, on his visit to Nashville in December 1854, denounced Ferguson as a Spiritualist, and the earlier controversy over the "post mortem" gospel was forgotten.[75] McFerrin, the Methodist preacher in Nashville who had formerly respected Ferguson very highly despite his disagreement with the "post mortem" gospel,[76] had no use for him after he joined the "spirit knockers"[77] and was only too glad to turn his pulpit over to Campbell. It was Ferguson's interest in

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[75] "A. Campbell in Nashville," Millennial Harbinger, Series IV, V (Jan., 1855), 45.

[76] Jesse B. Ferguson, "Dr. McFerrin's Magnanimity," Christian Magazine, Extra (Dec., 1852), 32.

[77] Davenport, Cultural Life in Nashville, p. 107.

Spiritualism rather than his "post mortem" gospel that finally split the church in Nashville into two hostile camps.[78]

A number of dissatisfied brethren in Nashville had withdrawn earlier from the church, and in 1856 they brought suit to obtain the Cherry Street property.[79] A lawsuit was planned for June 1, 1856, but Ferguson's resignation made litigation unnecessary. The extent of Ferguson's support at the time is indicated by the fact that a congregation which once numbered over 850[80] was reduced to only fifty-six by 1858.[81] The majority of the members were dispersed among the other churches of the city or left the church entirely.

As for Ferguson, after his resignation he continued for several years to ride the wave of popularity and preached sporadically in Nashville at the theater, the Odd Fellows Hall, and before various civic organizations.[82] The Nashville Daily Gazette referred to him in October 1858 as a "great independent preacher."[83]

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[78] _Ibid_.

[79] See p. 61 for the significance of this property.

[80] Herman A. Norton, "The Life and Work of Philip Slater Fall, 1798-1890," (unpublished M. A. thesis, Vanderbilt University, 1951), p. 80.

[81] James A. Cox, "Incidents in the Life of Philip Slater Fall," (unpublished B. D. thesis, The College of the Bible, 1951), p. 98.

> Finally, disillusioned and in poor health, he left Nashville to become the wandering preacher of the Southwest. He lived for a time in Mississippi, Alabama, and Missouri. He dabbled in politics and real estate and in 1870 he returned to Nashville. He died on September 3, 1870, and his death was hardly noticed in the city where he had been so popular a few years before.[84]

Davenport, an historian of Nashville, makes the interesting comment that the downfall of Ferguson marked a victory for the conservative element of the Disciples at Nashville.[85] Certainly the experience with Ferguson resulted in the disillusionment and scattering of the more liberal element of the church at Nashville--the element that contended for freedom of belief and opinion--and the victory of a small minority which held to a strictly orthodox platform. It also was a bitter disillusionment to Tolbert Fanning.[86] One of the reasons Fanning started the Gospel Advocate, which became the organ of the Southern churches, later the Churches of Christ, was to try to rebuild what he considered Ferguson and the Christian Magazine had wrecked. Fanning became hypercritical of any form of doctrinal innovation or deviation. It is logical to assume that the resulting church in Nashville would be more interested in maintaining a strict orthodoxy than churches in other areas which had never been through such a soul-scarring battle.

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[82] Davenport, Cultural Life in Nashville, p. 107.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Ibid., quoting the Gospel Advocate of September 22, 1870.

[85] Ibid.

[86] West, The Search for the Ancient Order, I, p. 268.

Was Alexander Campbell justified in his attack on Jesse Ferguson? Since Ferguson became a Spiritualist in the middle of the controversy, Campbell is generally justified for the estimate that he held of the man. It is likely that too much success coming too quickly made some form of ministerial discipline the only alternative to utter doctrinal chaos in Nashville. One must not overlook the fact that prior to the latter part of 1853, Spiritualism was not a factor in the controversy. Universalism was. The controversy originated over the opinion expressed in Ferguson's article, "The Spirits in Prison." In this issue Campbell apparently was quick to condemn an opinion he himself may have misinterpreted. To infer Universalism from the article was unfair both to the words and the intent of the author. To the end, Ferguson maintained he was condemned for expressing an opinion.

Campbell regarded Ferguson's position as basically undermining the gospel and therefore not properly in the realm of freedom of opinion. Campbell's own exegesis of the passages in question was farther afield than Ferguson's, and was no more entitled to be called orthodox, but the influence of the _Harbinger_ made it so. Campbell himself admitted that when he first formed it, his opinion was novel, though he later found confirmation in several theologians. The entire controversy was clearly an exercise of ministerial discipline through the pages of the _Harbinger_, and in spite of its necessity, it was frequently in violation of Campbell's own canons of editorial responsibility (see page 73).

Through the periodicals, then, the Disciples began to hammer out the meaning of orthodoxy, and bounds beyond which a minister could not step doctrinally without being punished. The process created many scars, arguments, and bad publicity, but for better or for worse it was the only practical means the Disciples possessed of obtaining a common ground beyond the sphere of the local congregation. The periodical was the source of commendation and condemnation. It was the editor, not the bishop, who disciplined.

CHAPTER III

SECTIONALISM, SOCIETY, AND SCHISM

Did The Civil War Divide The Disciples?

One of the most oft-quoted articles concerning the Disciples and the Civil War is Moses E. Lard's "Can We Divide?" The answer given by Lard is a resounding "No!" and this has been echoed by Disciple historians. The acceptance of this as an historical fact has been a source of pride among Disciples. Little attention has been given to Lard's reasoning, however. Lard felt the Disciples could not divide then or at any other time because the separating half would be a sect and the adhering half would still be the undivided body of Christ.[1] He believed that the church was essentially and actually indivisible, since the Disciples claimed to be individually members of the body of Christ and one member had no power to prescribe another's faith, conduct, or opinions.[2] Commenting on this article, Benjamin Franklin, the editor of the American Christian Review, noted that many had been filled with apprehension that the Disciples might divide over the Civil

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[1] Moses E. Lard, "Can We Divide?" Lard's Quarterly, III (April, 1866), 330.

[2] Ibid., p. 332.

War and added: "We grant that we have the elements among us to produce division, but they have not the machinery to do it."[3] He cited the Thomas, Ferguson, and Russell defections and the War, when "the Lord preserved us from division."[4]

Garrison and DeGroot maintain that the Disciples of Christ were the only large religious body in the United States that did not divide because of the Civil War.[5] They give as reasons:

1. The Disciple religious principle that ethics (e.g. slavery) is a matter of opinion, not faith.
2. The pacifism of Disciple leadership.
3. The loose organization, without machinery for excluding churches.
4. Traditional emphasis on Christian unity.[6]

Another writer, D. D. Keesee, concludes that the Civil War was a turning point in the general outlook of the Disciples but the change was partial, not absolute, and did not result in division until later.[7] He concludes that the Civil War did contribute to the division among the Disciples that came later but was not decisive.[8] David Harrell, a Church of Christ historian, is much stronger in his emphasis on the divisive effect of the War. He points out that the circulation of every major Disciple periodical in the post-war period had geographic limitations and in effect the Disciples did divide as a result of the Civil War.[9] According to Harrell, the Northern churches emerged committed to a denominational and socially active concept of Christianity and the Southern churches were committed more strongly than ever to an extreme sectarian emphasis.

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[3] "Can We Divide?" American Christian Review, XI (Feb., 1868), 36.

[4] Ibid.

[5] W. E. Garrison and A. T. DeGroot, The Disciples of Christ: A History (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1958), p. 330. This is true with the exceptions of the Cumberland Presbyterians, whose constituency was overwhelmingly Southern, and the Roman Catholics, whose organizational ties were international.

[6] Ibid.

> The sectional bifurcation of the Disciples of Christ--using the name to refer to the whole movement--is one of the most vivid American examples of the bending of the Christian ethos to fit the pre-suppositions of the community. All of the complex antagonisms in nineteenth-century American life--North and South, East and West, urban and rural, affluent and dispossessed--

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[7] Delbert D. Keesee, "The Churches of Christ During the War Between the States," (unpublished M. A. thesis, Division of Graduate Instruction, Butler University, 1954), p. 164. Hereafter referred to as "The Churches of Christ".

[8] Ibid.

[9] David E. Harrell, "A Social History of the Disciples of Christ to 1866," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 1962), p. 428. Hereafter referred to as "A Social History".

> left their marks on the theology and institutional development of the group.[10]

Harrell regards the Church of Christ-Disciples of Christ rupture as basically a North-South division[11] and notes that one of the distinctive characteristics of the Churches of Christ from their beginning has been the marked sectional distribution of the membership.[12]

Disciples' Attitudes Toward the War, Sectionalism, and Slavery

Most of the Disciples leaders at the approach of the Civil War were pacifists.[13] The editors were almost universally pacifists and had been so since the days of the Mexican War.[14] Keesee lists Alexander Campbell, J. W. McGarvey, Benjamin Franklin, David Lipscomb, Moses Lard, W. K. Pendleton and many lesser leaders both North and South as definitely pacifists.[15] In spite of their conviction these men had a difficult role to fill as war clouds darkened over the land. The "party spirit caused the position of the pacifist to be one of the most difficult that could be taken. The position . . . was seldom understood and, by those agitating the war spirit, never respected."[16]

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[10] David E. Harrell, "The Sectional Origins of the Churches of Christ," Journal of Southern History, XXX (Aug., 1964), 264.

[11] Harrell, "A Social History," p. 331.

[12] Harrell, Journal of Southern History, XXX, 263.

[13] Harrell, "A Social History," p. 356.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 379.

[15] Keesee, "The Churches of Christ," p. 24.

E. G. Sewell later wrote that David Lipscomb was the first preacher of his acquaintance in Middle Tennessee to preach publicly against the right of Christians to fight.

> Other preachers fell in line, and many of the members saw at once the scripturalness of the position, adopted it, talked it, preached it publicly in the congregations, advocated it everywhere, and firmly stood by it to the end of the conflict.[17]

Lipscomb, who became co-editor and later editor of the Gospel Advocate after the Civil War, maintained his pacifist position throughout the conflict and was one of the most influential Southern leaders who requested and obtained conscientious objector status for Disciples from the Confederate government.[18] The Gospel Advocate became the organ of the Southern churches after the Civil War. Its founder, Tolbert Fanning, and his co-editor, David Lipscomb, were both pacifists, but this did not prevent their being strong nationalists as well.

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[16] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

[17] E. G. Sewell, "Reminiscences of the Civil War Again," *Gospel Advocate*, XLIX (July, 1907), 456.

[18] Keesee, "The Churches of Christ," p. 60.

Among those men who were to be influential editors in the North in the post-war period feeling was divided. Alexander Campbell's senility militated against his influence after 1860. Isaac Errett, who became the editor of the Christian Standard, was strongly pro-war.[19] He tried for a commission in the Union army, but he was unsuccessful. He refused to adopt the pacifist position.[20] Benjamin Franklin, who edited the American Christian Review, was a pacifist before the war began and maintained this position throughout the conflict.

Tremendous abolitionist pressure built up against Franklin from many old friends and associates.[21] They chided him for staying on safe ground. Aside from the Millennial Harbinger, already declined in influence, Franklin's American Christian Review was the most influential periodical published by the Disciples during the war years. Franklin remained firmly on the ground pioneered by Campbell and refused to admit the question of slavery to the pages of his periodical. He believed if slavery was sin in his day then it was sin in Jesus' day, yet Jesus remained silent.[22] He wrote:

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[19] West, The Search for the Ancient Order, II, p. 27.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Benjamin Franklin, "A Letter from an Old Brother," American Christian Review, III (Feb., 1860), 34.

> We have been accused of being a "dough face," a "popularity seeker," "afraid of investigation," and called upon to speak out. . . . We proscribe no man on account of his views or his opinions, on slavery or any other subject.[23]

Franklin objected to the "schismatical" action of the abolitionists.[24] He felt the issue of slavery was entirely a matter of private opinion and, as such, had no place in the pages of a church periodical. In this stand, Franklin was seconded by Campbell and Moses E. Lard. One can read the wartime issues of Disciple periodicals without finding many references to the war. Franklin was personally conscious of the value of his position. He wrote that he had been active every day during the political conflict calling attention to the one great center of attraction--the Lord of life and glory.[25] He believed that a man may be politically wrong and religiously right, and wrote: "We know each other as Christians, not as political partisans."[26] He added:

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[22] Ibid.

[23] "Discussing the Question of Agitation," American Christian Review, III (Feb., 1860), 22.

[24] Ibid.

[25] "Our Position In these Troublous Times," American Christian Review, III (Dec., 1860), 196.

> We care not whether a man's politics be good or bad, whether he be right or wrong, politically; whether he be wise or unwise, politically; his politics must be kept out of the pulpit, out of the church, and out of our religious publications. . . . We have nothing to do with any sectional gospels.[27]

Had all Disciple editors been able to make this sharp distinction between politics and religion, the issues of the day would not have resulted in subsequent alienation and division.

As time progressed and the fever of partisan politics was heated in the forge of war, the pressure on Franklin to make the Review a spokesman for the anti-slavery group increased almost unbearably. He was accused of being pro-slavery. This he denied, saying he was pro-peace and pro-Christ, and he refused to "to pervert the religion of Christ by making it auxiliary to political ends."[28] By 1862 the Gospel Advocate, the only important Southern periodical, was silent, but the Review, published in Cincinnati, was scathing in its continual denunciation of the abolitionists.[29] Accused of being "hobbyists" on the matter of abolition by the Review, the Board of Directors of Northwestern Christian University denied the charge but affirmed their loyalty to the Union in crushing the "wicked rebellion." Franklin felt that men of this ilk were narrow-minded and schismatical.[30]

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[26] Ibid.

[27] "My Kingdom Is Not of this World," American Christian Review, III (Dec., 1860), 212.

[28] "Politics and Religion," American Christian Review, IV (July, 1861), 2.

The one national organization that involved the Disciple churches both North and South before the Civil War was the American Christian Missionary Society. It had originated in Cincinnati, and it continued to meet there annually. Before the war, Tolbert Fanning, editor of the Gospel Advocate held a position that might best be described as open-ended scepticism toward the Society. Franklin, himself an ardent supporter of the Society before the War, felt that Fanning might be a supporter of the Society also "if we could have had a little freer and fuller association with him."[31] Fanning attended the annual meeting of the Society in 1859. He wrote: "We were highly pleased with the spirit of the brethren, and their devotion to the cause of truth. . . . Much was done to destroy sectionalism and modify feelings of an ultra character."[32] There was some suspicion in the South that the Society was basically a Northern organization. Fanning considered it as such and was troubled by Benjamin Franklin's ardent advocacy of it.[33]

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[29] "N. W. C. University," American Christian Review, V (Aug., 1862), 2.

[30] "The Close of the Year," American Christian Review, V (Dec., 1862), 2.

[31] "President Fanning," American Christian Review, II (May, 1859), 86.

The opposition of the Gospel Advocate to the American Christian Missionary Society was not simply on the ground that it was sectional. The opposition was also partly on Biblical grounds. Fanning wrote to Isaac Errett, the corresponding secretary of the Society in 1860:

> Touching, however, institutions not recognized in the Scriptures, as agencies to carry forward the work of saving the world, many of us have staggered and still entertain serious doubts as to the expediency of taking any part in them. If we are to have societies, they should be of our own creation, under our own control.[34]

Two things should be noted about Fanning's pre-war attitude toward the Society: (1) he still classed it as an expediency, and (2) he left the door open for a society of some sort. It actually seems as if he might have been proposing a Southern society when he wrote that it would be bad policy for the Southern churches to exhaust their resources building up parties to their discredit.[35] The attitudes of both Fanning and Franklin toward the Society had changed considerably by the time the Civil War was over.

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[32] "Annual Meeting of the American Christian Missionary Society for 1859," Gospel Advocate, V (Nov., 1859), 330.

[33] "Papers Devoted to the Christian Religion," Gospel Advocate, V (Dec., 1859), 369.

[34] "Bro. Fanning's Remarks," Gospel Advocate, VI (Jan., 1860), 7.

There were three primary attitudes on slavery among the Disciples: (1) Southerners who saw no conflict between slavery and the Bible; (2) Northern abolitionists; and (3) those both North and South who thought slavery morally wrong but were unwilling to make this a test of fellowship.[36] Campbell, Franklin, Fanning, and Lipscomb fell into the last category. The main journalistic controversy was between the abolitionists and the latter group.[37] Franklin considered both abolitionists and Southern ultras as men of "one idea," "hobbyists," infusing schism among the brethren.[38] Isaac Errett was an anti-slavery man and so recognized among the brethren, but he too refused to identify with the radical movement.[39] Errett, however, argued for a "higher law" and cited Biblical examples of civil disobedience on the eve of the war.[40] In response to this, Fanning replied from the South that he was against the idea of a "higher law," which he termed the doctrine of feeling.[41] He wrote: "Our conclusion is, that the right or wrong of enslaving our fellow creatures, is not absolute, but incidental, permitted by the Creator for wise purposes and it is often not only necessary but indispensible both for the governors and the governed".[42]

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[35] Ibid.

[36] Eileen Gordon Vandegrift, "The Christian Missionary Society: A Study in the Influence of Slavery of the Disciples of Christ" (unpublished M. A. thesis, Division of Graduate Instruction, Butler University, 1945), p. 13.

[37] Ibid., p. 14.

[38] Ibid., p. 16.

With the weight of Disciple leadership on the side of moderation, matters might have rested easy before the actual outbreak of the War if it had not been for a small, vocal abolitionist group in the church. Two issues, both related to the American Christian Missionary Society, stirred their ire. One was the sending of Dr. Barclay, a slaveholder, out as a missionary, and the other was the refusal of the Society to support Pardee Butler as an abolitionist home missionary in the Kansas Territory. In response to those who supported Butler and condemned the Society for refusing to support him, Franklin wrote:

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[39] Harrell, "A Social History," p. 297.

[40] *Ibid.*, p. 280.

[41] "The Higher Law," *Gospel Advocate*, VII (March, 1861), 70.

[42] *Ibid.*

> But let no man make the church, the Missionary Society, or our religious periodicals, an engine for either of these works [pro- or anti-slavery]. It is a perversion of the Lord's name and authority to appropriate it to such a work. The Missionary Society cannot support men to preach pro-slavery or anti-slavery. It can have nothing to do with that question. It cannot be made a party to that quarrel. Its mission is to preach the gospel of Christ--to know nothing but Christ and him crucified--to preach him to all classes, high and low, rich and poor, bond and free, all nations, tribes, and tongues.[43]

Both Tolbert Fanning and David Lipscomb would have agreed. Since Franklin was located in the North, he received many letters urging him to make plain his stand on slavery. After refusing for some months, he responded:

> 1. If those who labor on the subject will show where the Lord ever gave a decision or opinion, we will publish and maintain it.
> 2. The same goes for the Apostles.
> 3. If they will show where the Lord or the Apostles ever discussed the subject, we will discuss it.
> 4. If they didn't discuss it, we won't.
> 5. Those who condemn us for ignoring it condemn Jesus and the Apostles. We follow them.[44]

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[43] "Elder Pardee Butler, Elder Jonas Hartzel, etc.," American Christian Review, II (Jan., 1859), 14.

[44] "Our Position Called for," American Christian Review, II (March, 1859), 42.

John Boggs, the former corresponding secretary of the American Christian Publication Society and W. K. Pendleton's informant, was now the fiery abolitionist editor of the *North-west Christian Magazine*. He opposed sending Dr. Barclay as a missionary because he had once owned slaves. Boggs wrote:

> In forcing Dr. Barclay upon the Brotherhood, the editors of the *Harbinger* and the *Review* virtually endorse the traffic in the flesh and blood, and bones, and souls of those church members who, for seventeen hundred and fifty "pieces of silver," were transferred from the pious -! Barclay to his Christian -! brother John Tyler, Elder of the Scottsville, Va., congregation.[45]

Franklin opposed him with these scorching words:

> We never discussed, nor attempted to decide the question of *slavery itself*, but have *opposed abolitionists because their course is unscriptural, schismatical, and ruinous to the cause of Christ*. Their course has nothing to do with the abolition of slavery.[46]

Pardee Butler, an abolitionist, desired to represent the American Christian Missionary Society as a home missionary in the new Kansas country. Butler wrote to Isaac Errett, then the corresponding secretary of the Society, asking for support.[47] Errett told him he must ignore the question of slavery and anti-slavery if he wished to receive Society support, and Butler refused this condition.[48] Franklin felt that Butler's effort was "an insidious effort to involve our Missionary Society in the slavery controversy."[49] He pointed out that the Society would also reject any brethren the South might send to preach proslavery.[50] After Errett and the Society refused to support Butler in 1858 on the formal ground that "the object of this Society is to disseminate the gospel in this and other lands" and not to disseminate theory, speculation, and inference of the New Testament on slavery,[51] the abolitionists issued a call for a convention separate from the American Christian Missionary Society in September 1859.[52] John Boggs and Ovid Butler sent circulars to responsible persons in the churches they wished to interest in the movement. Boggs was then editor of the Christian Luminary, successor to the North-western Christian Magazine. The circular called a meeting to convene at Christian Chapel in Indianapolis on November 1, 1859, to form a North Western Christian Missionary Society.[53] The reasons given for this action were:

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[45] Vandegrift, p. 22, citing John Boggs, *North-western Christian Magazine*, Sept., 1857, p. 87.

[46] "Honor of John Boggs," *American Christian Review*, III (Sept., 1860), 144.

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[47] Vandegrift, p. 23.

[48] Ibid., p. 27, citing Christian Luminary, July 28, 1859.

[49] "One-Idealsm--Creating Schism," American Christian Review, I (Nov., 1858), 178.

[50] "Elder Pardee Butler, Elder Jonas Hartzel, etc.," American Christian Review, II (Jan., 1859), 14.

[51] Joseph Franklin and J. A. Headington, The Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin (St. Louis: John Burns, Publisher, 1879), p. 405.

[52] Vandegrift, p. 29.

> 1. It is legitimate for the church to have as many organizations as necessary to do the work.
> 2. The American Christian Missionary Society, which receives support from all over the Union, requires all its officers, agents, *et. al*. to be silent on the question of slavery.
> 3. The Northern brethren regard slavery as a moral evil to be denounced, and therefore cannot co-operate in the American Christian Missionary Society.[54]

The much-feared schism came to the Disciples with this convention. Benjamin Franklin fairly burned the pages of the Review with his denunciation of this movement. He called it desolating ultraism, a perversion of Scriptures, inconsistent, contradictory, and schismatical and he called the originators schemers, religious pettifoggers, demagogues, and factionalists.[55] He considered

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[53] *Ibid*., p. 32.

[54] *Ibid*.

[55] "A Factious Movement," *American Christian Review*, II (Aug., 1859), 138.

"there never was a more unreasonable movement among our brethren than this."[56] His main reason for opposing the move was its tendency to divide the Disciples in the North and set them to wrangling. He felt they ought to have the decency to call it by its right name: "The Northwestern Abolition Society.[57] In response, Boggs wrote:

> The writers of the Review, and others, opposed to the Convention, have labored in vain to frighten the anti-slavery brethren from their principles, and now at the eleventh hour, they sound the tocsin, in order to rally the enemies of the Convention. . . .[58]

The Convention of the North Western Christian Missionary Society, as it was first called, met anyway despite the violent opposition. Delegates were present from Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Iowa, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and the Kansas Territory.[59] There were only seventy-three present in all with an overwhelming preponderance from Indiana. Article Four of the constitution they drew up spelled out the qualifications for membership, specifically excluding any guilty of "complicity in the crime of

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[56] "The Secret Circular," American Christian Review, II (Sept., 1859), 150.

[57] "The Call for a Convention in Indianapolis," American Christian Review, II (Sept., 1859), 154.

[58] Vandegrift, p. 38.

[59] Ibid., pp. 41, 42.

American Slavery."[60]

This was clearly a sectional effort, a schism based on opposition to slavery alone. The Indianapolis group had no other difference with the American Christian Missionary Society. Boggs, one of the leaders, asserted in 1862 that if the American Christian Missionary Society would oppose slavery, the Christian Missionary Society (the "North Western" was dropped prior to 1862) would dissolve.[61] He added:

> But if, through the influence of those who are willing to compromise moral principles for self-interest, the brotherhood should be gagged, and preachers and others who are known to be secessionists are received as brethren in the Lord, and retained as officers of the Society: then it strikes us, that all true Christians will repudiate the Society and unite with the one organized at Indianapolis.[62]

This sectional group never did draw large numbers to its support. In November 1862 attendance was too small to conduct business. The last mention of the Society in the Luminary came in December 1862.[63] The group probably merged into the American Christian Missionary Society. Harrell has pointed out that the loyalty resolutions of the parent group effected a reunion with the radical abolitionists in 1863, which was essentially a capitulation of the American Christian Missionary Society to the radical Northern position.[64]

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[60] Vandegrift, p. 54, citing Christian Luminary, Nov. 17, 1859.

[61] Ibid., p. 74.

[62] Ibid., p. 75, citing Christian Luminary, Sept., 1862.

[63] Ibid., p. 76.

The Society and The Resolutions

The American Christian Missionary Society, the only national organization of the Disciples in the 1860's, was organized in 1849 "to promote the preaching of the gospel in destitute places in this and other lands."[65] Benjamin Franklin was one of the delegates present at the organizational meeting, along with 154 others.[66] Tolbert Fanning was made a vice-president in the 1849 meeting, though his name was dropped a year later.[67] A great many people watched the Society's annual meetings carefully to see what attitude it would take toward slavery and the Civil War. Fanning and Franklin were anxious to keep it neutral; Boggs and Butler were equally anxious to commit it to the cause of abolitionism. Franklin wrote with evident relief that all was harmonious at the Convention of 1860. Men were present from both North and South, and there was no discordant note.[68]

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[64] Harrell, "A Social History," p. 343.

[65] Report of the Proceedings, 1849, p. 3.

[66] Ibid., p. 8.

[67] Report of the Proceedings, 1850, p. 44.

In 1861 the Society met in Cincinnati as usual. The Board of Managers reported a drop in receipts and spoke in a neutral way of the nation's trial as being responsible for this.[69] This kind of neutrality was not enough for patriotic citizens. Since the meeting was in Cincinnati, naturally the attendance was entirely from the Northern and Border States. Dr. J. P. Robison offered the following resolution:

> Resolved, that we deeply sympathize with the loyal and patriotic in our country in the present efforts to sustain the Government of the United States. And we feel it our duty as Christians, to ask our brethren everywhere to do all in their power to sustain the proper and constitutional authorities of the Union.[70]

This was a mild enough resolution for a nation at war. It was mild indeed compared to the violent reactions of the religious periodicals of other denominations; but to those who were looking to the future, a sectional resolution of any kind was anathema and would bring ultimate division.

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[68] "Great Missionary Meeting," American Christian Review, III (Oct., 1860), 176.

[69] Report of the Proceedings of the Thirteenth Anniversary Meeting of the American Christian Missionary Society: Held in Cincinnati, Oct. 22, 23, 24, 1861 (Cincinnati: Published by the Society, 1861), p. 7.

[70] Ibid., p. 20.

David Burnet raised the question as to whether the resolution was in order since it did not fit the stated object of the Society. The chair ruled that it was in order. John Smith moved an appeal from the decision of the chair to the house. After considerable discussion the appeal was sustained and the resolution declared out of order. Then, on the motion of L. L. Pinkerton, the Society took a recess of ten minutes.[71] David Burnet presided at a mass meeting called during the recess. Dr. Robinson's resolution was again read, and after a few remarks from Colonel James A. Garfield the resolution was passed with only one negative vote.[72] All of this procedure was brought about by the fact the majority present were in sympathy with the resolution but feared that it would alienate many from the Society. It did that.

Benjamin Franklin felt that had the purpose of the recess been understood it would not have been granted. Campbell and Pendleton dismissed the whole action as a farce.[73] Franklin himself considered the recess a political meeting and resented an account of it being printed in the Society minutes.[74] In an extended criticism of the tendency expressed in the resolution, Franklin wrote:

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[71] *Report of the Proceedings, 1861*, p. 20.

[72] *Ibid*.

> We have maintained that Christians may voluntarily meet, preachers and private members, raise funds, arrange missions, send missionaries and make provision for their support, etc., etc., confining themselves purely to the missionary work. But if they step over this boundary in any way to interfere with the government and discipline of the church, or ministry, or introduce resolutions, or questions of the world, of any sort, aside from pure missionary work, they overstep their legitimate boundary, and the tendency must be to schism.[75]

There was a strong note of warning in Franklin's words. In order to keep down division, he strove manfully to keep the Society hewing to what he regarded as its original and only purpose. Failing this, he was giving evidence of his opposition to an organization he had from the first championed against all criticisms. He served notice that if it became either more or less than a Missionary Society he would not try to defend it or be responsible for it.[76]

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[73] Benjamin Franklin, "The Rejected Resolution," American Christian Review, V (Jan., 1862), 2.

[74] Ibid.

[75] "Ecclesiastical Organizations," American Christian Review, V (Feb., 1862), 2.

[76] "A Blow Struck at the Report," American Christian Review, V (Feb., 1862), 2.

Franklin also opposed all loyalty resolutions on the part of state societies on the grounds that they were not germane and outside the societies' legitimate sphere of action.[77]

No resolution was offered at the 1862 Convention. An offensive reference to the "rebellion" in the report of the Board of Managers was objected to by J. W. McGarvey, who offered to substitute "attempt at revolution."[78] McGarvey's objection was tabled. Banjamin Franklin continued to labor in 1863 against political resolutions. He wrote: "We can have no Republican or Democrat churches or Missionary Societies. We must not divide."[79]

The difference of opinion which had existed since 1860 came to a dramatic climax in 1863. The moderates had managed to control the Society Conventions of 1861 and 1862, largely because of the absence of the radical abolitionists, who had splintered off in 1858. But where abolitionism failed to dent the Society, nationalism succeeded. Men could not stand dispassionately by while being accused as traitors. The break came in the form of a resolution by R. Faurot:

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[77] "Communication," American Christian Review, V (July, 1862), 2, and "Co-operation Meeting in Pennsylvania," VI (Jan., 1863), 6.

[78] Report of the Proceedings, 1862, p. 15.

[79] "Ohio State Missionary Society," American Christian Review, VI (Sept., 1863), 154.

> Whereas, "there is no power but of God," and "the powers that be are ordained of God;" and whereas, we are commanded in the Holy Scriptures to be subject to the powers that be, and "obey magistrates;" and whereas, an armed rebellion exists in our country, subversive of these divine injunctions; and whereas, reports have gone abroad that we, as a religious body, and particularly as a Missionary Society, are to a certain degree disloyal to the Government of the United States; therefore--
> Resolved, That we unqualifiedly declare our allegiance to said Government, and repudiate as false and slanderous any statements to the contrary.
> Resolved, That we tender our sympathy to our brave and noble soldiers in the field, who are defending us from the attempts of armed traitors to overthrow our Government, and also to those bereaved, and rendered desolate by the ravages of war.
> Resolved, That we will earnestly and constantly pray to God, to give our legislators and rulers wisdom to enact and power to execute, such laws are [*sic*] will speedily bring to us the enjoyment of a peace that God will deign to bless.[80]

The wonder is not that the resolution came before the Convention in 1863, but that the moderates were able to keep it from coming up until then.[81] It is a tribute to the passion for unity and the respect for diverse opinions that the Disciples were able to maintain neutrality in a national organization which was, practically speaking, a Northern Society during the Civil War. It is also a tribute to the untiring labor and influence of Benjamin Franklin and the American Christian Review.

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[80] *Report of the Proceedings, 1863*, p. 24.

[81] The Disciples' reaction to the war was far more moderate even after 1863 than that of other church groups. The firm conviction in the churches both North and South was that God was on their side and the enemy represented Satan incarnate. The Civil War was a "Holy War." For an extended treatment of this, see Brooks Major, "The Civil War as Reflected in Contemporary Religious Periodicals," from which the following citations are taken:

After the Faurot Resolution was presented, there was a motion to adjourn. Opponents, remembering what happened in 1861, defeated the motion to adjourn. A question of order was raised. The chair decided, according to the

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> The schooling gotten in these camps and fields of war for freedom will assert its acquisitions in first principles, especially at the West; and too, in that to be re-peopled and Christianized South, where Jesus Christ and the Gospel government are to follow the bloody rule of Satan. Congregational Quarterly, IV (1862), 292.
>
> We thought slavery was barbarous and brutalizing in its influence and how brutalizing few people had any conception of, till this rebellion brought out into daylight all its capabilities for perfidy and cruelty. Monthly Religious Magazine (Unitarian), XXVIII (July, 1862), 55.
>
> The Rev. Mr. Moody said there are three "B's" in divine government--Ball, Bayonet, and Bible. Daily Christian Advocate (Methodist), May 3, 1864.
>
> The cause of the North is simply the cause of God and of Mankind. Monthly Religious Magazine, XXXI (April, 1864), 129.
>
> We have crossed swords with the Northern Confederacy over the Bible. Southern Presbyterian Review, XIV (Oct., 1861), 365.

vote of the house in 1861, that the resolution was not in order. An appeal from this decision was discussed and sustained. Adjournment was again moved and again lost. A move that the resolution be tabled lost. After all this parliamentary squirming, the preamble and resolutions were then adopted by the body.[82] Harrell maintains this was made possible by the return of the abolitionists to the American Christian Missionary Society after the dissolution of the Christian Missionary Society.[83] At any rate the 1863 resolution was a crucial event in the realignment of forces among the Disciples. The moderates in the North lost power, and the Society was now aligned with the extremists.[84] The motivation of the resolution was obviously nationalism, not abolitionism. This did not prevent the action from ripping open sectional sores. Aylette Rains, an Eastern Kentucky preacher, noted in his diary: "Bro. McGarvey has taken the position that the A. C. Missionary Society is dead!"[85]

McGarvey was still a supporter of the Society in spite of his dislike of the "war" resolution of 1863. He noted, however, in the Review that the Society was dangerous in that it was liable to usurp power and develop strife and division.[86] Pendleton and Campbell, co-editors of the Harbinger, believed the action in 1863 had done much injury to the general interests of the Society and placed it under a cloud. Pendleton wrote: "The fact that the Society violated her constitution in introducing and forcing to a willful vote a set of political resolutions, cannot be denied or explained away."[87] Benjamin Franklin was stunned. He wrote: "We do not feel as full of hope for the Society as we have done on some former occasions."[88]

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[82] Report of the Proceedings, 1863, p. 24.

[83] Harrell, "A Social History," p. 343.

[84] Harrell, Journal of Southern History, XXX, p. 267.

[85] Ibid., p. 268.

The American Christian Missionary Society had met some opposition from the time of its origin, principally from men who felt it was an unscriptural organization. By 1859 about the only vocal opposition remaining was that of the Gospel Advocate and the small band of militant abolitionists. In spite of a lack of financial support, the Society received almost unanimous approval among the Disciples in the early 1860's. After the resolutions of 1863,

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[86] J. W. McGarvey, "Missionary Societies," American Christian Review, VI (Dec., 1863), 194.

[87] "American Christian Missionary Society," Millennial Harbinger, Series V, VII (Sept., 1864), 419.

[88] "The General Missionary Meeting," American Christian Review, VI (Nov., 1863), 178.

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however, Benjamin Franklin ceased his support of the Society and gradually moved into firm and vocal opposition to it.

The Society was not through resolving. In the 1865 Convention, J. W. Lamphear moved:

> Resolved, That we have great and abundant reason for thanksgiving to the Ruler of Nations, not only in the return of peace to our suffering country, but also in the emancipation of the slave and the triumphant vindication of our free and beneficial Government.[89]

T. P. Haley moved to table the motion, and lost. L. L. Pinkerton moved its referral to the Business Committee, and the move carried.[90] The brethren were still gun-shy from the reaction in 1863. The Business Committee reported a substitute for the Lamphear Resolution:

> Whereas, the conflict of the last four years has resulted in the emancipation of four millions of slaves, and the return of peace to our suffering country, now opens an effectual door for Missionary efforts among a destituted people within our own borders. Therefore, Resolved, That we accept the leadings of Providence and will endeavor to meet the exigency, that the poor may have the gospel preached to them.[91]

This resolution passed after a few minor changes in wording. The Society then proceeded to make arrangements to send a missionary to work among the freedmen in Tennessee.[92] His labors were confined principally to Nashville and vicinity, where at least one congregation was organized by 1866.[93]

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[89] Report of the Proceedings, 1865, p. 5.

[90] Ibid.

[91] Ibid., p. 14.

The Reaction of the *Review* and The Establishment of The *Christian Standard*

A large number of Disciples had opposed the war resolutions of the Society, though many accepted the sentiments of the resolutions themselves. They believed that the Society had no right to act on a political question. The leader of this group was Benjamin Franklin, editor of the *American Christian Review*, probably the most widely-read journal among the Disciples in the 1860's and 1870's.[94] Franklin led in the renewal of the attack on the Society which followed the Civil War.

To understand the importance of Franklin's stand, something of the background of his relationship to the Society should be known. He was from the beginning the strongest editorial supporter of the Society. His support began in 1850 when he was the editor of the *Proclamation* and Reformer.[95] He defended the Society against the attacks of Jeremiah Smith, who objected to the "money basis" of membership. Franklin began the publication of the American Christian Review on a weekly basis in January 1858. The first month he began a running debate with David Oliphant, editor of the Canadian Christian Banner in defense of the Society. In his debate with Oliphant, Franklin said the Society infuses the missionary spirit, and is not unscriptural.[96] He maintained that its constitution and by-laws were simply an agreement of the churches and brethren as to how they would operate and that the Society was nothing but a convenient arrangement of the churches. Franklin met and answered every argument that was ever brought up against the Society. He served as the editor of the Christian Age during its brief career as the official publication of the Publication Society.

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[92] *Ibid*., p. 12.

[93] *Report of the Proceedings, 1866*, p. 13.

[94] Franklin and Headington, p. 343.

The principal argument against the Society before the Civil War was that it was not authorized in the New Testament and that local congregations were the only divinely appointed "missionary society". Some leaders (among them Tolbert Fanning) felt that the Society was not the church and therefore support of the Society took away from the church one of its rightful tasks. In answering this argument, Franklin wrote: "The missionary arrangements of the primitive church were based on convenience, not the law of God; and therefore are not binding."[97] He felt that too many objected to the Society, threw their weight against it and then objected because the Society did not accomplish more. The Review carried a regular section headed "Missionary Matters" and contained notices, announcements, and reports of the Society.[98]

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[95] Benjamin Franklin, "Missionary Society," Proclamation and Reformer, I (July, 1850), 451.

[96] "Do the Lord's People Need a Missionary Society?" American Christian Review, I (Jan., 1858), 10.

While the American Christian Missionary Society had no official organ after the sale of the Christian Age and the demise of the American Christian Publication Society, the Review was the unofficial organ.[99] It remained unchallenged in that role until dissatisfaction began to develop with Franklin's position on the war and slavery. Elijah Goodwin's Christian Record, published in Indianapolis, became a weekly in 1862 mainly because of the dissatisfaction of the loyalists with the Review's pacifism.[100] The

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[97] "The Missionary Society," American Christian Review, I (March, 1858), 38.

[98] See American Christian Review, I (April, 1858), 53 for an example of "Missionary Matters," and I (Nov., 1858), 177 for a sample of the reports contained.

[99] Benjamin Franklin, "A Word for the Review," American Christian Review, III (Nov., 1860), 188.

[100] Harrell, "A Social History", p. 384.

Record immediately began to wage war on the Review's position of silence. Goodwin felt that Franklin would change his mind quickly enough if a few shells fell in his vicinity.[101] S. E. Shepard wrote in the Record:

> In my heart I condemn an editor who will wink at this wicked attempt to overthrow our Government, or who will attempt to weaken the Government in its effort at self-preservation by an appeal to the religious sentiment of the people.[102]

There was to be no neutrality in a nation at war. A position of neutrality was considered as treason. Franklin was stung by Goodwin's charge of disloyalty, but he continued to maintain the position he felt to be morally and practically right.[103]

As early as 1861 leading loyalist preachers D. Pat Henderson, Silas E. Shepard, and Isaac Errett were corresponding about launching a new prestige weekly to challenge the Review.[104] By 1863 most Northern preachers were openly critical of Franklin and the Review. A loyalist group, including Errett, tried to buy the Review but failed because they considered Franklin's price of $6,000 too high, especially since they doubted that a large percentage of Franklin's subscribers would support a pro-war journal.[105] David S. Burnet denied Franklin's claim that the Society had declined since 1861 because of politics and attacked Franklin, claiming that patriotism was never a cause of weakness.[106] Burnet felt that Franklin's position had been harmful to the cause of the Society. Franklin answered that the integrity of the Society was at stake--not just a matter of Union and patriotism--but the precedent of introducing irrelevant matter into the Missionary Society.[107] As the written debate between Franklin and Burnet continued, Burnet, who was serving as corresponding secretary of the Society, flatly charged Franklin with opposition to the Society. Franklin replied: "Whether the Society shall succeed or be abandoned depends wholly upon the course it pursues. It can be used to advantage, if devoted to its legitimate work and will die if it departs from it."[108] In short, if the Society expected to continue enjoying Franklin's support it must abandon all aims except the strictly missionary. The Society was unwilling to do this, and Franklin's support turned to bitter opposition.

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[101] Keesee, p. 99.

[102] Ibid.

[103] "Brother Goodwin's Remarks," American Christian Review, VI (Nov., 1863), 178.

[104] Harrell, "A Social History", p. 410.

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[105] Ibid.

[106] Benjamin Franklin, "The A. C. Missionary Society," American Christian Review, VI (Nov., 1863), 186.

[107] Ibid.

[108] "Missionary Society," American Christian Review, VI (Dec., 1863), 202.

Prior to the War, Isaac Errett and Benjamin Franklin had stood side by side as staunch friends and supporters of the Society. There were many articles by Errett in the pre-war Review. Errett wrote Franklin when he (Errett) retired as corresponding secretary of the Society:

> I owe it to you, Bro. Franklin, to say, that in my labors I have ever found in you a hearty coadjutor. Your columns have always been open, and your pen ever ready; and the brethren owe you a debt of gratitude for the unrestricted use of the Review in behalf of the American Christian Missionary Society.[109]

In the years that followed, however, Errett and Franklin found themselves at odds on several questions. Their disagreement in 1862 on the matter of open communion developed into a highly personal controversy.[110] They were at odds early in 1863 over the question of the "creed" of the church at Detroit.[111] They also disagreed over the War. Franklin remained a pacifist, and Errett, though moderate on the slavery question, was a strongly pro-war nationalist after the War began. By 1864 Errett and Franklin were no longer friends. David Lipscomb later said that Errett had made a violent personal attack on Franklin to him in the presence of a witness, saying Franklin thought to exert his influence in managing the Convention of the Society and if Errett had favored a resolution, Franklin would have opposed it for that reason alone.[112] Errett's statement to Lipscomb fully recognized that a contest had developed between him and Franklin as to who should control the Society.[113] Franklin was probably referring to Errett's activity when he later said that one of his chief reasons for opposing the Society was that it was used to promote selfish ends.[114] Lipscomb was referring to Errett when he said that he met some of Franklin's opponents in the North a few years after the Civil War and that they denounced Franklin as a "common liar, hypocrite, and lick-spittle for Southern brethren, trampling on his own convictions to secure their favor."[115]

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[109] Isaac Errett, "A Word at Parting," American Christian Review, III (Nov., 1860), 180.

[110] Benjamin Franklin, "The Communion Question," American Christian Review, V (June, 1862), 2.

[111] Benjamin Franklin, "Elder Isaac Errett," American Christian Review, VI (Sept., 1863), 146.

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[112] David Lipscomb, The Standard and the Hymn-Book, with an Exposition of Its Course Toward the Missionary Society (Nashville: A. M. Sewell, Book and Job Printer, 1883), p. 22.

[113] Ibid.

[114] Ibid., p. 16.

[115] "Benjamin Franklin," Gospel Advocate, XX (Dec., 1878), 758.

In 1866 the effort to establish a competitor for the Review succeeded with the launching of the Christian Standard. That same year the Gospel Advocate began publication again. Both the Standard and the Advocate were sectionally-oriented weeklies in direct competition with the Review.[116] The founders of the Standard wanted to form a paper which would champion the "progressive" attitude.[117] Wasson, Garfield's biographer, wrote:

> There is no conclusive evidence as to who first suggested the idea of starting the paper; however, it is certain that Garfield had talked about it as early as December, 1865, and took the initiative in calling a meeting to discuss the proposed project.[118]

Like Isaac Errett, James A. Garfield had been an enthusiastic supporter of the Union cause during the War. A group of men called together by Garfield met at the home of Thomas W. Phillips on December 22, 1865.[119] Included in the group was Isaac Errett. They formed a stock company called "The Christian Publishing Association," and on January 22, 1866, the company was granted a charter.[120]

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[116] Harrell, "Journal of Southern History," XXX, p. 269.

[117] Woodrow W. Wasson, James A. Garfield: His Religion and Education (Nashville: Tennessee Book Co., 1952), p. 92.

[118] Ibid.

[119] J. S. Lamar, Memoirs of Isaac Errett (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Co., 1893), I, 302.

[120] Wasson, p. 93.

The first issue of the Christian Standard appeared in April 1866 with Isaac Errett as editor. The company had bought the subscription list of Elijah Goodwin's Christian Record, which consisted of about 2,000 names.[121]

The Standard's first home was Cleveland, Ohio. It failed to pay expenses the first year, and the company turned the paper with its assets and liabilities over to Errett in January 1868.[122] Errett Moved the Standard to Alliance, Ohio, where he was associated with a college, but the paper still lost money. R. W. Carroll and Company of Cincinnati offered to take over the business end of the paper and publish it if Errett would move it to that city. Errett accepted the offer and moved the Standard to Cincinnati in 1869. From that date to the present the Standard has been published weekly at Cincinnati.

One of the chief reasons for the establishment of the Christian Standard was to destroy the influence of the Review and to lead the Disciples into more liberal channels.[123] Though the reason ostensibly given was to furnish a more refined literary paper, the Standard also came about as a result of sectional interest.[124] Isaac Errett's moderate course as an editor, however, displeased the more rabid loyalists.[125] The Christian Standard was a staunch supporter of the Missionary Society from the first issue, and as such it quickly supplanted Franklin's Review. David Lipscomb suggested that this was the chief cause of Franklin's turning against the Society, but Franklin had turned against the Society as early as 1863.[126] The resolutions of that year were definitely the turning point for Franklin.

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[121] Ibid.

[122] Lamar, p. 348.

[123] West, The Search for the Ancient Order, II, 30.

Errett resented the restriction of the message of the church and the isolation of religion from every-day life.[127] Commenting on the slavery issue, he wrote in 1866:

> Take, for instance, the question of slavery. This was a political question--but it was a political question with high moral and religious bearings.[128]

With the success of the Standard and its close relationship to the American Christian Missionary Society,

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[124] Harrell, "The Sectional Origins", p. 269.

[125] Harrell, "A Social History", p. 411.

[126] Lipscomb, p. 22.

[127] Isaac Errett, "Religion and Politics," Christian Standard, I (Sept., 1866), 204.

[128] "Religion and Politics," Christian Standard, I (Oct., 1866), 212.

Franklin and the Review drifted into deeper opposition to the Society and into bitter opposition to the Standard. The rivalry between the two periodicals was unremitting and personal. Concerning the Society, Franklin wrote in 1867:

> A determination prevailed to keep out everything that was not strictly missionary work. This was late repentance; a little too late. When some of us plead for this, with tears, before the mischief was done and our hearts pained with inexpressible grief, we were insulted and could not even get to speak.[129]

It was apparent by then that in their personal rivalry over leadership in the Society, Errett had defeated Franklin. Now and again Franklin attempted to re-kindle his support of the organization but his heart simply was not in it. Like Moses Lard, he considered the Cincinnati Society a ruin and a reproach which had degenerated into a political clique.[130]

As Franklin moved away from the Society, he was welcomed into the opposition camp by the Gospel Advocate. Replying to the Advocate, he wrote: "While we have held these societies in doubt from their founding, we loved the men favorable to them, as we do yet, and thought if they would confine themselves strictly to the work of spreading the gospel, we could work with them."[131] The last six years had settled that question for Franklin.

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[129] "Minutes of the A. C. M. Meeting," American Christian Review, X (Jan., 1867), 13.

[130] Moses E. Lard, "A Few Words on Missionary Societies," Lard's Quarterly, IV (April, 1867), 149.

The leadership of the Disciples was concerned with Franklin's turn-about in his support of the Society. George Elley of Kentucky called on him to tell what caused his change of mind. Franklin replied that he had doubted all along and accepted the Society only with reservations. In reviewing the matter, he wrote that the churches had no right to create a society--that they were the creation of individuals who were now claiming the control of churches, money, and preachers.[132] J. S. Sweeney was also perplexed by Franklin's change. Franklin replied to Sweeney reminding him of the rebuffs the Society had dealt him (Franklin). He had been inclined to blame the men involved, but now concluded: "the cause of the trouble is not in the men, nor in a bad object, for the men are good and the object is good, but in an unwise and unauthorized delegated body, liable at any time to involve us in similar troubles."[133] Charles Louis Loos asked in the pages of the Millennial

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[131] "Convention Abolished," American Christian Review, X (April, 1867), 124.

[132] "Explanation for Bro. G. W. Elley," American Christian Review, X (May, 1867), 148.

[133] "Sweeney to Franklin," American Christian Review, X (May, 1867), 156.

Harbinger about Franklin's change. Loos noted that in May 1866 Franklin had said publicly that the legitimate right of such a society was beyond argument. Loos wondered what had happened in the last six months to change his mind.[134] The principle thing which happened was the founding of the Christian Standard. In response to Loos, Franklin cheerfully admitted his change of mind.[135] Commenting on this, Pendleton wrote:

> It is humiliating to see the antagonism of personal pretensions with great public interests, and the mingling of political passions and resentments, and narrow and selfish sectional feelings, with the spiritual, universal and benevolent aspirations and aims of the gospel.[136]

Pendleton noted that Franklin had complained that the war resolutions had violated the constitution of the Society and added that "many of us didn't like the resolutions, but we love missions more."[137]

When the Society met for its annual Convention in October of 1867, Franklin had no notice of the event in the pages of the Review except for a short comment after the event was over. Commenting on R. M. Bishop's election as president, Franklin lauded him as a good man for the job. Franklin's alienation from the Society had intermittent lapses. Aside from his praise of Bishop, Franklin noted a plea from G. W. Abell for support for work with Negroes. He approved and urged this support from the Society, pointing out that there was no longer an abolitionist or proslavery issue--not a political issue involved--not a sectional issue.[138] In 1868 the Review contained an article on the Convention by W. T. Moore entitled "Let Us Have Peace". The writer called on the Disciples "to stand not so much upon the order of the work as upon the work itself."[139]

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[134] "Bro. Franklin's Argument for the Missionary Society," Millennial Harbinger, XXXVIII (May, 1867), 241.

[135] "Prof. C. L. Loos and the Harbinger," American Christian Review, X (June, 1867), 188.

[136] "Reply," Millennial Harbinger, XXXVIII (Aug., 1867), 417.

[137] Ibid., p. 418.

The Reaction of the Gospel Advocate and the South

The only widely influential periodical of the Disciples in the South in the years immediately following the War was the Gospel Advocate. It was founded by Tolbert Fanning in July 1855 with editorial help from William Lipscomb, principally to make amends for the harm done by

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[138] "Editorial Comment," American Christian Review, XI (Sept., 1868), 284.

[139] W. T. Moore, "Let Us Have Peace," American Christian Review, XI (Nov., 1868), 364.

Jesse Ferguson and the *Christian Magazine*.[140] The *Advocate* was forced to suspend publication in 1861 but began republication as a weekly in 1866. David Lipscomb, William's brother, was Fanning's co-editor in 1866, and two years later he assumed the editorship alone upon Fanning's retirement.[141]

Tolbert Fanning, a graduate of the University of Nashville, had established a female seminary in Franklin, Tennessee, in 1837. With the co-operation of his wife, a sister of Philip Slater Fall, Fanning opened Franklin College in 1845.[142] He began his work as an editor by publishing and editing the *Christian Review* in 1844, and four years later he turned the periodical over to Jesse B. Ferguson, who named it the *Christian Magazine*.[143] Fanning always felt something of a personal responsibility for Jesse B. Ferguson and was a strong opponent of Ferguson in the Nashville Church controversy.

David Lipscomb, a pupil of Tolbert Fanning, was the prime mover in the re-establishment of the *Gospel Advocate* in 1866. For years Lipscomb carried the brunt of the load of publishing and editing the Advocate. Lipscomb had been baptized by Fanning and was his protegé. Lipscomb was a plain, unassuming, simple, blunt man. One of his outstanding characteristics was an excessive frankness in both the written and spoken word.[144] During the Civil War Lipscomb was a pacifist and was instrumental in securing conscientious objector status for those Disciples who cared to claim it.

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[140] West, *The Search for the Ancient Order*, I, 268.

[141] *Ibid.*, II, 21.

[142] *Ibid.*, I, 108.

[143] *Ibid.*, p. 268.

One of the stated purposes of the Gospel Advocate was to examine co-operation and to fight so-called "human systems" in the church.[145] When the American Christian Missionary Society was first organized, Tolbert Fanning was listed as a vice-president.[146] David Lipscomb served as the secretary of the Co-operation of the Christian Churches in the Mountain District of Tennessee.[147] Fanning was active in the early organization of the State Meeting of the Tennessee churches.[148] In 1856 the Advocate reported on numerous co-operations.[149] As to their value for the church, the Advocate's attitude seemed to be "watch and wait." Neither Fanning nor David Lipscomb was opposed to churches co-operating for a stated purpose, but both had reservations about the Cincinnati Society. These reservations began to harden into concrete opposition in 1861. After the war resolution of 1861 was passed, Fanning wrote that he regretted a few preachers in the North had passed a resolution "approving most heartily of the wholesale murder of the people South who do not choose to be governed by a sectional party North."[150]

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[144] Ibid., II, 13.

[145] Ibid., I, 268.

[146] Report of the Proceedings, 1849, p. 4.

[147] "Notice," Gospel Advocate, I (Sept., 1855), 88.

[148] "State Meeting," Gospel Advocate, I (Sept., 1855), 95.

[149] See Gospel Advocate, II (June,1856), 168 for an example.

After the war, when the Advocate resumed publication, Fanning sent out notices to various leaders asking for their support. Thomas Munnell wanted to know if the Advocate intended to oppose the Society, and George Elley warned Fanning that Kentucky was committed to the work of the Society.[151] Fanning called this a "test of fellowship" intended to drive the churches of the South away and replied that he was disposed to let the Society alone.[152] This questioning of Fanning's intention sprang from his pre-war doubt of the Society's right to exist. There is some reason to believe that Fanning's suspicion of the Society sprang from his unhappy experience with Jesse B. Ferguson, who was a leader in the Tennessee organization.[153] At any rate, though Fanning may have been disposed to let the Society alone, David Lipscomb was not. Lipscomb bitterly resented the war resolutions of the Society. He considered that the two institutions, the Christian and the worldly, were necessarily separate and distinct, and that they could form no alliances.[154] This was essentially the same viewpoint held by Benjamin Franklin. Lipscomb was referring to the war resolutions and the Northern pro-war men when he wrote in 1866 that "preachers who have urged their fellow men to deeds of blood and violence are wolves in sheep's clothing and can never reach or benefit the people of the South."[155] The Society's action in sending a missionary to Nashville did not help matters.

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[150] "Ministers of Peace in World's Conflicts," Gospel Advocate, VII (Nov., 1861), 347.

[151] Tolbert Fanning, "Missionary Societies," Gospel Advocate, VIII (Jan., 1866), 20.

[152] Ibid.

Lipscomb made the Advocate a violently anti-society organ in the post-war years. He wrote of the Society:

> We have felt, we still feel, that without evidence of a repentance of the wrong, it

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[153] Billy Joe Humble, "The Missionary Society Controversy in the Restoration Movement, 1823-1875" (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, State University of Iowa, 1964), p. 158.

[154] David Lipscomb, "The Church of Christ and the World Powers," Gospel Advocate, VIII (Jan., 1866), 29.

[155] "The South As a Field of Religious Labor," Gospel Advocate, VIII (Jan., 1866), 65.

> should not receive the confidence of the Christian Brotherhood. The wrong of which we here speak, is the introducing of a political or national principle into the Church of God.[156]

It is significant that the resolutions were the "wrong" he spoke of and not the basic unscripturalness of the Society, and that he left the door open for repentance on the part of the Society. As Benjamin Franklin had already discovered, however, that repentance was not forthcoming. Lipscomb had more to say about the Society's role during the War:

> . . . We found only the vindictive, murderous spirit ruling its councils, and encouraging the *Christian* (?) work of *Christians* North robbing and slaughtering Christians South. So far as we have been able to learn, this has been its chief solicitude for four years past, and to this solicitude it has conformed its action.[157]

When the Society secured the right to the profits of Alexander Campbell's hymnal and the trustees published a new edition, Lipscomb wrote of the book:

> We confess, brethren, we prejudged the book, and it may be the blood tints and blood stains, that to our mind it acquired in passing through the bloody-hearted *Christian Missionary Society*, help to dim its pages to our eyes.[158]

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[156] "I Did Wrong," *Gospel Advocate*, VIII (Feb., 1866), 21.

[157] "The New Hymn Book," *Gospel Advocate*, VIII (Feb., 1866), 134.

[158] *Ibid*., p. 135.

This kind of language in an influential Southern periodical was not exactly calculated to hasten the reconciliation of Christians South to Christians North. Indeed, the Advocate men among the Christians South never did become reconciled. The separation of 1906 was merely the formal ratification of a condition that had existed for forty years, though there was no machinery for disfellowshipping churches other than the periodicals and the test of support of the Society. When W. C. Rogers, then corresponding secretary of the American Christian Missionary Society, issued a call for support in 1866, Lipscomb replied in the Advocate:

> Those brethren who believe that political resolutions are the Gospel can do so; and those who desire to contribute to such an object can do so; we cannot do it.[159]

In referring to the resolution of 1865 Lipscomb wrote: "If there was no other objection to this Society, this resolution would forever preclude it from doing good."[160]

At the same time the Christian Standard, in its support of the Society, was rejoicing in the emancipation of four million slaves and the overthrow of a system fruitful of wrong.[161] The Advocate compared the action of the Standard and the advocates of the Society to that of Pilate, except that the editor felt Pilate to have been somewhat more pure.[162] Nathan W. Smith of Georgia inquired of the Standard how a Christian man could engage in war. Errett replied:

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[159] "A Reply to the Call of W. C. Rogers," Gospel Advocate, VIII (Mar., 1866), 109.

[160] "A Reply," Gospel Advocate, VIII (Mar., 1866), 207.

> Our brethren in the North who stood by the Government in the dark and bloody years of rebellion are but little indebted to our journals for vindication. Our soldiers were engaged in a war of necessity. The nation was assailed and the red hand of rebellion uplifted. . . . War is among the ordinations of Jehovah. It has not only been permitted, but commanded by him.[163]

For a while it looked as though the Disciples might renew the martial conflict after the rest of the nation had ceased fighting. In continuing his response to Smith's letter, Errett denied that the Society resolutions were political. Paradoxically, he added that silence would also have been political.[164] Errett did not feel that Christians could ignore questions which agitate society; far from seeing anything frightful in this attitude, he felt it was a hopeful one.[165]

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[161] Isaac Errett, "The Freedmen," Christian Standard, I (April, 1866), 4.

[162] David Lipscomb, "The Cincinnati Society and the Hymn Book," Gospel Advocate, VIII (April, 1866), 265.

[163] Isaac Errett, "A Letter from Georgia," Christian Standard, I (June, 1866), 76.

[164] Ibid., p. 84.

The Gospel Advocate accused Errett of questioning its motives by asserting that the whole thing was just sympathy for a lost cause and a desire to excite sectional feeling. Errett denied this, but added that the Advocate's course was not exactly free from political bias.[166] This was true. The Advocate was admittedly a sectional paper. Lipscomb wrote that it was "the only paper in our brotherhood that has felt interest enough for the impoverished South to make an appeal in its behalf. . . ."[167]

Articles or editorials concerning the Society were soon scarce in the Advocate. After the first flurry of recrimination, it managed to ignore the Society question pretty well. Lipscomb did condemn the Society in two editorials in 1869. In the first, he noted the Methodist attempts at merger and also attempts among the Disciples, whom he called "professing Christians." He felt all such attempts would lead to formal unions only "without a particle of heart reconciliation."[168] "Such unions," he added, "are not Christian, and the men engaging in them are devoid of respect for the Christian religion of their own characters."[169] He did not feel that one could kill, slay, murder, and then smother the wrong instead of confessing it.[170] In the second editorial he wrote:

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[165] Ibid.

[166] "The Gospel Advocate," Christian Standard, II (Feb., 1867), 52.

[167] "Response to Bernard," Gospel Advocate, VIII (July, 1866), 478.

> For twenty years it (the Society) has schemed and devised, has planned and changed; has catered to one fleshly sensual caprice and another; has fostered and flattered the political prejudices of one section; has become a party to a political bloody war, to enable it to float with one sectional current; and now comes across the river to flatter, cajole, and court another and opposite sectional feeling . . . .[171]

Lipscomb may have been a pacifist as far as bullets were concerned, but he was not backward when words were the weapons.

Other Arguments Against The Society

It would be a distortion to leave the impression that the only source of criticism against the American

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[168] "Re-Union," Gospel Advocate, XI (June, 1869), 568.

[169] Ibid.

[170] Ibid.

[171] "Which? God's or Men's?" Gospel Advocate, XI (June, 1869), 584. Lipscomb was commenting on the "Louisville Plan," an effort to re-organize the American Christian Missionary Society in order to secure greater harmony.

Christian Missionary Society was the war resolutions. The Advocate opposed the Society on other grounds both before and after the Civil War. The main argument in the Advocate was that the Society was unscriptural, a human organization founded on human wisdom and therefore out of place in the divine plan. In 1858 Fanning wrote: "For many years we have felt but little confidence in any missionary operation founded in human wisdom. We need not fear a northern or southern spirit while the Bible maintains supreme authority."[172] J. K. Speer opposed the Society in the pages of the Advocate because there was no command in the Bible for it and because it was not the church or a legitimate part thereof.[173] In an editorial note following Speer's article, Fanning agreed. Fanning reported that a group had met in Nashville in January 1842 and examined the Bible closely for seven days and nights. They concluded there was positive Scriptural authority for every work well-pleasing to God, that the church was the only divine organization, and that other organizations tended to obscure and discredit the reign of the Messiah.[174]

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[172] "Jamaica Mission," Gospel Advocate, IV (May, 1858), 149.

[173] J. K. Speer, "Human Organizations and the Gospel Advocate," Gospel Advocate, VI (Aug., 1860), 225.

[174] "The Teaching of the New Testament Regarding

In the face of attacks from both the Advocate and the Review, the Society met for its Eighteenth Anniversary in October 1866. W. K. Pendleton, editor of the Harbinger, delivered a classic defense of the beleaguered organization. He pointed out the great commission of the Lord to evangelize the world and added, "He cannot abandon a cause like this if we are true and faithful."[175] He then proceeded to answer specific attacks against the Society:

1. As to the Society's being a departure from the early Disciple position, the Disciples have always maintained there is no authority in human opinions, and this includes the early opinions of Alexander Campbell in his Christian Baptist.
2. As to the Society's being unscriptural, scriptural silence is not prohibitory.
3. As to the Society's usurping the prerogative of the church, the church is not just a local unit; there is also a church universal.[176]

Benjamin Franklin decided the whole Society principle was wrong after his initial disillusionment with the Society in 1863. He felt the principle was wrong because the Society was a "human" organization (i.e. not divinely appointed) and on the practical ground that it did not

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Christian Co-operation," Gospel Advocate, VIII (Feb., 1866), 82.

[175] "Address by W. K. Pendleton," Millennial Harbinger, XXXVII (Nov., 1866), 497.

[176] Ibid., pp. 497, 501, 507.

accomplish the work it claimed to have been established to do. After noting Pendleton's defense, Franklin listed his objections to the Society:

1. We should follow apostolic precedent.
2. The Society scheme had no existence in the time of the apostles.
3. Alexander Campbell had considered the Society as auxiliary to the church, but now the situation was reversed.
4. The Society consists of self-constituted individuals and the church has no voice in it.
5. The Society wastes too much money.
6. It is a human scheme and a failure.
7. It causes men to lose sight of the churches.
8. Favorite men in the Society receive large salaries.
9. The Society affords the rich an opportunity to make a show.
10. Two or three good men, working in the field, could do more good than the whole Society.[177]

In short, Bro. Franklin was opposed to the Society on Biblical, social, and practical grounds. Isaac Errett disagreed with all of Franklin's objections, but he questioned the tenth one especially. He had written earlier:

> Those who favor missionary societies have no objection to individual churches sustaining evangelists by weekly contributions: *but let us see them do it*. We cannot save the world by theories. Give us the *deeds*. . . . Let the arguments against the Societies be superior results of their [the opponents] mode of operating.[178]

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[177] "Minutes of the A. C. M. Meeting," *American Christian Review*, X (Jan., 1867), 13.

[178] "Missionary Effort," *Christian Standard*, I

Franklin vehemently denied the charge that he was "anti-missionary" and wrote that he was still a missionary man even though he was no longer a Society man.[179] Errett felt that he was neither,[180] and he scored the iconoclasm of both Fanning and Franklin.[181] By 1867 the Christian Standard was the only weekly among the Disciples advocating the support of the Society.[182] Errett maintained that congregational enterprise alone was not enough.[183] Franklin felt that it was[184] and that the Society was "all send and no go."[185]

Attempt at Reconciliation

A sincere attempt at reconciliation on the Society question was made with the adoption of a new constitution

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(April, 1866), 20.

[179] "The True Issue Defined," American Christian Review, X (Sept., 1867), 300.

[180] "The Missionary Controversy," Christian Standard, II (Jan., 1867), 28.

[181] "Substitute for Missionary Societies," Christian Standard, II (Feb., 1867), 52.

[182] Isaac Errett, "Tell It as It Is," Christian Standard, II (March, 1867), 68.

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[183] "The Missionary Controversy," Christian Standard, II (March, 1867), 100.

[184] "Missionary," American Christian Review, XVIII (Jan., 1875), 18.

[185] "The Conventions," American Christian Review

at the Louisville Convention of the Society in 1869. The old American Christian Missionary Society was dissolved and a General Christian Missionary Convention formed on what came to be called the "Louisville Plan."[186] The root of the idea went back to a proposal made by Robert Milligan in 1866. Anxious to secure harmony, Milligan presented thirteen theses as a basis for re-organizing the Society and asked the brotherhood for opinions.[187] According to Milligan's plan, the local churches would choose delegates to district organizations; the district organizations would choose delegates to the state organizations; and the state organizations would choose delegates to a general convention. The missionary receipts from the local church would be sent to the district. The district would keep half and send half to the state. The state would keep half and send half to the General Convention. This plan would supposedly remove two principle objections to the old Society: that it was composed of individuals instead of churches, and

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XVIII (Sept., 1875), 284.

[186] Franklin and Headington, p. 344. For the Constitution of the General Christian Missionary Convention, see Grant K. Lewis, The American Christian Missionary Society (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1937), pp. 194 through 198.

[187] An Open Letter to Benjamin Franklin from Robert Milligan, quoted in Isaac Errett, "Missionary Societies," Christian Standard, I (Nov., 1866), 250.

that membership was on a purely money basis. Many at the time considered this structure to be a simple organizational plan and a fair representative system.[188]

Errett, in commenting on Milligan's proposal, did not oppose it, but he felt it would do little to mollify Franklin and Fanning.[189] True to his prediction, it had no effect whatever on Fanning. Franklin, however, gave the plan his genuine support. Pendleton's response was favorable, though he, too, was doubtful about the result.[190] He noted that David Lipscomb had already rebuffed the proposal.

After the new constitution was adopted in Louisville Franklin was ecstatic and McGarvey happy.[191] David Lipscomb sarcastically, but truthfully, remarked "no church ever yet had any difficulty distributing its funds. The difficulty had been in raising them."[192] This was the rub. The Louisville Plan, originating as a desperate effort to achieve harmony, was an administrative and financial failure from the start. By 1875 it had passed quietly into oblivion.[193] Franklin's support was necessarily brief, but it was genuine. He wrote later:

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[188] Ibid.

[189] "Missionary Societies," Christian Standard, I (Nov., 1866), 260.

[190] "Bro. Milligan on Missionary Societies," Millennial Harbinger, XXXVIII (Jan., 1867), 18.

[191] David Lipscomb, "The Report and the Readers of the Advocate," Gospel Advocate, XII [sic] (Nov., 1869), 1062.

[192] Ibid.

> When the Louisville Plan came up we saw that, if carried out in the true spirit and import of it, all societies except the congregations of the Lord, would be abolished, and that the whole would proceed from the churches, and the work be done by them.[194]

Franklin's reaction to the Louisville Plan seemed to indicate a genuine desire to return to the co-operative fold, but when the new plan proved a failure, he resumed his antagonism toward the co-operative work. Thomas Munnell pointed out that Franklin had published a plan in the American Christian Review around 1867 which was very similar to the Louisville Plan.[195] Milligan had endorsed it at the time and so had Munnell. Munnell reminded Franklin that the Louisville Plan had been adopted because Franklin and others kept urging a change. Franklin admitted this was true, asked forgiveness "for this wrong," and promised to do it no more.[196] He was through with the Society in any form.

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[193] Benjamin Franklin, "The Conventions," American Christian Review, XVIII (Nov., 1875), 372.

[194] "Anti-Missionary," American Christian Review, XVIII (Feb., 1875), 52.

[195] Benjamin Franklin, "Thomas Munnell to Benjamin Franklin," American Christian Review, XXI (April, 1878), 113.

Conclusion

The Disciples attitude toward slavery and sectionalism was inextricably interwoven with the attitude toward the American Christian Missionary Society. The location of the Society in Cincinnati assured that most of its support and attendance would come from the North. The patriotic resolutions of 1861, 1863, and 1865 further aligned it with the North. The Disciples did not divide over the issue of slavery unless one considers the formation of the North Western Christian Missionary Society a division, and even this lasted only until 1863. Had the pacifism of Disciples leaders been able to prevail amidst the emotional conflicts of actual warfare, it is doubtful they would have emerged from the War in a divided condition. Sectionalism, or nationalism, divided the Disciples. They were inclined to be patriots first, brothers second. The lack of machinery for excluding churches did not prevent their practical exclusion on the basis of non-co-operation with their fellow churches in the only machinery available--the Missionary Society. After the War, the controversy centered around the Society question.

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[196] Ibid.

Benjamin Franklin, editor of the influential *American Christian Review*, changed from support to opposition in his relationship with the Society directly because of the war resolutions, which he regarded as pure politics. The opposition of the *Gospel Advocate* was more complex, but the war resolutions were obviously a key factor. Before the War, the *Advocate* was a moderate opponent of the Society; after the War, it was a hard and uncompromising opponent. The editorials of David Lipscomb left little doubt that the war resolutions left deep and angry scars. All of this opposition was frequently covered with a cloud of theological reasoning. David Harrell notes:

> The most revealing fact of the postwar sectional agitation was the persistent practice of both Northern and Southern church leaders of linking their sectional prejudices with their theological convictions.[197]

Whether the division actually came during the War or later depends largely upon the standards by which one defines division. Inasmuch as the periodicals were capable of producing division there was division, hard and fast, where it had not formerly existed. The year 1866 saw the emergence of the first truly sectional periodicals among the Disciples, and a truly sectional church in both North and South. The lines would not harden for several decades, but the split was there.

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[197] Harrell, *Journal of Southern History*, XXX, 270.

CHAPTER IV

INNOVATIONS: SETTLED PASTORATE AND ORGAN

The Settled Pastorate

In addition to the issue of ministerial discipline the Disciples editors applied themselves to the whole nature of the ministry. The Disciples began with a negative concept of the traditional role of the clergy. It was much clearer what they were against in this area of the church's life than what they were for. Some of Alexander Campbell's bitterest diatribes in the early issues of the Christian Baptist were directed against the abuses of the clergy, and his words remained as a legacy to haunt the Disciples as they endeavored to develop a professional ministry.

Campbell began a series of six articles on the clergy in the first issue of the Christian Baptist, August 1823. The last article of this series appeared in February 1824. He wrote:

> No class of men that ever appeared on earth have obtained so much influence, or acquired so complete an ascendancy over the human mind, as the clergy. . . . Behold the arrogance of their claims! and the peerless haughtiness of their pretentions! They have said, and of them many still say, they have an exclusive right, an official right to affix the proper interpretation to the scriptures; to expound them in public assemblies; insomuch, that it would be presumptuous in a layman to attempt

> to exercise any of these functions which they have assumed.[1]

One can almost hear the chorus of "Amens" arising from the firesides of crude cabins along the frontier. Alexander Campbell regarded the bishop, or overseer, of a local congregation as "Neither priest, ambassador, minister of religion, clergyman, nor reverend divine"; but simply one who had the oversight of one voluntary society.[2] The ministry Campbell envisaged in the Christian Baptist was essentially a lay ministry. Concerning young clerical students, he wrote satirically:

> His former classmates, with whom he was once so jovial, retain their former jocularity or sobriety,--there is no alteration of their visage. But my young priest gradually assumes a sanctimonious air, a holy gloom overspreads his face, and a pious sedateness reigns from his eyebrows to his chin. His very tone of voice participates of the deep devotion of his soul. His words flow on with a solemn slowness, and every period ends with a heavenly cadence. There is a kind of angelic demeanor in his gait, and a seraphic sweetness in all his movements. With his Sunday coat, on a sabbath morn, he puts on a mantle of deeper sanctity, and imperceptibly learns the three grand tones--the sabbath tone, the pulpit tone, and the praying tone--these are the devout,

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[1] "The Clergy," Christian Baptist, I (Oct., 1823) 61.

[2] Ibid., p. 63.

the more devout, and the most devout.[3] Campbell was bitterly opposed to what he called the "hireling clergy." He considered money the bond of union in popular establishments and the rock upon which the popular churches were built. He was opposed to paying preachers, and he wrote: "The modern clergy say they do not preach for money. Very well, let the people pay them none, and they will have as much of their preaching still."[4] Besides, he added, there would then be no suspicion of their veracity. W. E. Garrison considered the attitude of the Disciples founders a "radical congregationalism and laicism."[5] He pointed out that most of them had unhappy experiences with what seemed to them an arrogant clergy and they came to believe the clergy was chiefly to blame for the theological subleties and ecclesiastical politics which caused cleavages in the church.[6]

The result of this essentially negative attitude can be seen in the organization of a typical Disciples congregation in the middle of the nineteenth century. The nearest thing to a minister in the present-day usage was an "evangelist" who received little, if any, pay from the congregation.[7] A comparatively small number of traveling evangelists attempted to serve the needs of a large number of churches. These men were generally farmers or teachers who in their spare time, made the rounds of the churches in their area, devoting a total of from two days to two weeks to each one of them.[8] Their work was occasionally supplemented by the labors of a fellow-evangelist who might live in the same area. These men, often well-educated, spent their time primarily in establishing new congregations and periodically reviving old ones. They did not think of themselves as the sole pastors of particular congregations--or indeed, as "pastors" at all. The pastoral oversight was in the hands of the elders of the local congregation who presided over the worship and discipline of the church week by week. Far from being discontented with the lack of a resident ministry, "many of the brethren objected to the settled ministry on what they considered scriptural grounds."[9] This situation was tailored to fit the abilities of the Disciples' churches on the frontier. The arrangement proved unusually effective in the establishment of numberless small, new congregations.

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[3] "The Clergy, No. IV," Christian Baptist, I (Jan., 1824), 134.

[4] "The Clergy, No. V," Christian Baptist, I (Feb., 1824), 159.

[5] W. E. Garrison, Heritage and Destiny (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1961), p. 51.

[6] *Ibid*., p. 55.

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[7] For a case study of the organization of the churches in a Kentucky District, including ministerial supply, see Brooks Major, The Green River Christian Co-operation, 1849-1859 (Elkton, Ky., Privately printed, 1957), p. 8.

[8] Noel Keith, The Story of D. S. Burnet: Undeserved Obscurity (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1954), p. 66.

Ruth Bordin, writing about the Free Will Baptist ministry, could well have been describing the Disciples:

> The organization of this new body very consciously was patterned on primitive Christianity. As was typical of sects, they saw themselves returning to the simple faith of Christ's early followers. They "labored to reconstruct the apostolic platform," they eschewed doctrine . . . and saw the Bible as their only rule of faith and practice. . . . Government of the group rested with its lay members, led by an elected teaching elder who preached . . . .[10]

In her study of the Free Will Baptists Bordin found that the professionalization of the clergy came later and was still not accomplished by the second generation, although the leadership of the group was totally committed to the principle before the end of the period.[11] The professionalization of the clergy among the Disciples was perhaps slower than among most kindred groups because of their extreme emphasis on the restoration of primitive Christianity and their rural and frontier environment. The idea of a settled pastor slowly began to recommend itself, however, particularly in some of the larger city churches.

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[9] Henry K. Shaw, Buckeye Disciples (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1952), p. 32.

[10] Ruth B. Bordin, "The Sect to Denomination Process in America: the Freewill Baptist Experience," Church History, XXXIV (March, 1965), 78.

[11] Ibid., p. 92.

Jesse B. Ferguson was called to Nashville specifically to be the pastor of that church on a full-time basis as early as 1847. Noel Keith asserts that David Burnet was the first settled pastor among the Disciples, having begun his work in Cincinnati in 1844.[12] Alanson Wilcox felt that Isaac Errett's work at the New Lisbon church entitled him to that honor.[13] Definitions of the meaning of "settled pastorate" vary, but Peacock defines the settled pastor as one who is (1) called to, and (2) supported by one church; (3) technically serving that one church as a full-time vocation; and (4) set apart by specific education and ordination.[14] Both Burnet and Errett met these qualifications in the 1840's, but they were exceptions rather than the rule. When Errett allowed the word "reverend" to be associated with his name by the Detroit church, his indiscretion, because of ingrained Disciples antipathy to any form of clerical pretense and power, was like waving a red flag before a bull.[15]

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[12] Keith, p. 66, citing F. D. Power, Sketches of Our Pioneers (Cleveland: Bethany C. E. Co., 1898), p. 127.

[13] Alanson Wilcox, A History of the Disciples of Christ in Ohio (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Co., 1918), p. 43.

[14] J. Richard Peacock, "The Origin of the Settled Pastorate Concept in the Disciples of Christ" (unpublished class paper, Texas Christian University, 1964), p. 1.

Except for a few individual cases which sufficed to arouse sporadic editorial ire and stimulate the flow of righteous opposition from a few pens, the Disciples editors did not get down to any serious positive thinking about the nature of the ministry until the 1860's. There were few congregations prior to that time which were large enough or wealthy enough to maintain a settled pastor. With the coming of a new generation of young preachers and with the increased desire for ministerial services on the part of churches no longer in the initial throes of establishment and content with the haphazard lay ministry provided by the elders of the local church, the problem of the relationship between the minister and the local church arose and invited editorial attention. The development of the settled pastorate was largely due to sociological rather than theological changes.[16] Some members of the editorial fraternity were suspicious of these changes.

Benjamin Franklin was sure of one thing: a minister's education did not entitle him to put on any airs. He wrote: "We are not aware that the circumstance of uneducated men preaching has ever done any serious harm; but, on the other hand, we know they have done an immense amount of good."[17] Franklin was always sensitive to charges against his own grammar and syntax, and he was opposed to the "pompous, self-sufficient" men of society. He was a man of the common people, and he consciously identified with them.[18] He considered all titles applied to the clergy as poor things, only claimed by and applied to weak men, and wrote: "We want men of common sense and not uncommon sense."[19] Franklin had nothing but contempt for many of the younger generation of ministers:

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[15] Lamar, p. 277.

[16] Peacock, p. 4.

> Why have boys, that have never read the Bible regularly once through, talking about "My pulpit," "my church," "the church over which I preside," and "exchanging my pulpit with the Rev. ___?" How utterly sickening and contemptible.[20]

In discussing the pastorate in 1865, W. K. Pendleton noted that there were three classes of officers in the church: presbyters or elders, deacons, and evangelists. He considered the pastor an elder contemplated in the relation of a shepherd to a flock.[21] He felt that the office of elder and pastor were the same, but the specific work was indicated by the term "pastor." Pendleton felt that a man might be an elder and not a pastor, but he could not be officially a pastor without also being an elder.[22] The pastor's authority was that of an elder--a co-ordinate with the other local elders--nothing more. W. W. Hayden was concerned about ordination. He asked Pendleton if a man was a pastor because he performed the work of a pastor or must he also be ordained an elder before being a pastor. Pendleton replied he would not deny that an unordained man doing the work was actually a pastor, but "there is a strong presumption that the matter which is divinely prescribed is necessary. . . ."[23] Pendleton considered ordination a divinely appointed form of induction into office. As to what constituted a pastor, he wrote:

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[17] "An Educated Ministry," American Christian Review, III (April, 1860), 54.

[18] Ibid.

[19] "Titles of Preachers of the Gospel," American Christian Review, III (April, 1860), 58.

[20] "Letter of Bro. Richardson," American Christian Review, III (Aug., 1860), 128.

> If this question looks to the manner of choosing the pastor, we answer, it is to be done by the free suffrage of the con-

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[21] "Pastors and Teachers," Millennial Harbinger, XXXVI (Feb., 1865), 85.

[22] Ibid.

[23] "Questions about Pastors and Teachers," Millennial Harbinger, XXXVI (May, 1865), 212.

> gregation. If it looks to the manner of appointment, we answer, by prayer, fasting, and laying on of hands, because he is only one of the elders, with a special work assigned to him. He is not a pastor *officially* till the office is conferred upon him in this way by the congregation.[24]

Pendleton's attitude is fairly representative of the more progressive approach toward the pastorate by Disciple editors. The *Harbinger* was generally seconded in this approach by the *Christian Standard*.

The *Advocate* and the *Review* were infinitely more conservative and considerably more fearful of any kind of innovation. David Lipscomb felt that every congregation ought to raise its own preacher instead of calling him away from somewhere else and a preacher who responded to such a call was like a man deserting his mother for money.[25] Tolbert Fanning was concerned about the meaning of "office" and "officer" pertaining to the church,[26] as well as the authority of an evangelist. He wrote: "We know of no authority in the scriptures for concluding that an election or ordination is a necessary qualification for doing any work in the house of God."[27] Fanning deplored the attempt to make shepherds of youths or pastors of lads. He felt the whole authority of the church rested in the senior members, not such men as were made elders by the mockery of an election and ordination, but such as grew up to their places in the church. These were the men he regarded as God's overseers, or pastors.[28] He was against anything "official" connected with the church. In response to Fanning, Elijah Craig, editor of the Gospel Echo, said he was worried about the preachers not, like the Advocate, the church. He wanted the preachers paid and respected.[29] He added:

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[24] *Ibid*., p. 214.

[25] "Ought Every Church to Have Its Preacher?" *Gospel Advocate*, VIII (Jan., 1866), 42.

[26] "Questions to Elder B. Franklin, Editor of the American Christian Review," *Gospel Advocate*, VIII (Sept., 1866), 585.

> We have long been prepared to see strange things from that quarter [the Advocate], but we confess to having been surprised at the position assumed by said paper that a "man is a preacher, because he preaches, and a bishop because he is an old man."[30]

Craig was "inclined to reject the Advocate's old-man system, as we would 'old wive's fables.' In repudiating clerical authority, we need not reject the truth,"[31] he said.

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[27] "Church Organization," Gospel Advocate, VIII (Sept., 1866), 595.

[28] Ibid., p. 596.

[29] "Duty to Gospel Preachers," Gospel Echo, IV (Nov., 1866), 425.

[30] "Preachers and Bishops," Gospel Echo, IV (Nov., 1866), 437.

[31] Ibid., p. 438.

Some wanted to subvert the pastor's authority by scattering his efforts among many churches. Isaac Errett replied to this theory:

> It is remarkable that men who are alarmed every time they hear the word pastor, and grow nervous over the fact of a pastor giving all of his time to one church, can look with content and approval on this most unscriptural arrangement of a preacher who is neither Elder, Evangelist, nor Deacon, working away on his treadmill, grinding out his monthly grist for a church, and leaving them for three weeks not only without care, but often without one meeting being held in his absence, even to keep the ordinances of the church.[32]

Errett believed that the pastor's duty (he was not in the least afraid of the "one-man system") was to rule, oversee, feed, guide, protect, and recover the flock. Whether that work was performed by the elders in common or by the evangelist was all one to Errett.[33] He recognized pastoral work and the term itself as scriptural.[34] His approach to the problem was basically practical--a result of his personal experience:

> As already intimated, in a perfectly organized church, with a competent eldership, there may be, and generally ought to be, a division of labor . . . some

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[32] "A Word of Warning," Christian Standard, II (Feb., 1867), 60.

[33] "Pastoral Labor, No. 1," Christian Standard, II (April, 1867), 124.

[34] Ibid.

> ruling, others teaching, others preaching, others visiting; and all working into one another's hands, But there are few such churches, and often the whole variety of duties crowd into the hands of one or two men. . . .[35]

While the approach of the *Advocate* was almost wholly theoretical, advocating the following of the proper doctrine even if it meant the destruction of the churches, and the approach of the *Standard* was practical, trying to meet the problem with the most workable solution, the *Review* felt the theoretical approach was the most practical as well and sided with the *Advocate* on that basis. Franklin wrote: "The way to 'get into the work,' is to find an opportunity to preach and go at it and preach."[36] He felt a man should be a preacher first, then if he had acceptable ability and integrity, he should be ordained as an endorsement and commendation of his work.[37]

In general, one would hardly realize the periodicals were discussing the same issue. While the *Advocate* and the *Review* were boggling at the "one-man system" and the making of pastors by ordination, the *Standard* accepted the office of pastor as a matter of fact. Errett spent most of his column space urging more efficient fulfillment of the office.[38] He considered the rule of the churches by a plural eldership disorderly:

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[35] *Ibid.*

[36] [no title], *American Christian Review*, X (April, 1867), 125.

[37] *Ibid.*

> It is no longer necessary that every one preach, teach, baptize, etc., and, not being necessary, it would evidently become disorderly and reprehensible if any were to disregard the established division of labor and interfere in the work assigned to others.[39]

This made Benjamin Franklin's blood boil. He let it be generally known that there was a process underway among the Disciples to create a new office: that the pastorate and pastoral office were being recognized as distinct from the offices of overseer and deacon.[40] He recognized the need for preachers, but insisted "there is no shepherd's office."[41] In the latter part of 1868 and early 1869 J. W. McGarvey and Tolbert Fanning in the form of a series of letters and replies discussed church order in the pages of the Gospel Advocate. Fanning made it plain that he disliked the term "officer" and refused to divide "Christ's body into officials and non-officials."[42]

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[38] For an example, see Isaac Errett, "Preachers," Christian Standard, II (Oct., 1867), 323.

[39] "Official Duties and Honors," Christian Standard, III (May, 1868), 140.

[40] "Creating an Office in the Church," American Christian Review, XI (Nov., 1868), 348.

[41] Ibid.

While these querulous debates were occupying the pages of the Advocate and the Review, Errett was dealing with the work of the pastorate in a series of articles in the Standard. In this series, he assumed a settled pastorate and emphasized the importance of the task of shepherding the flock.[43] Errett was acutely aware that this was one point in which the Disciples were woefully deficient. Many churches were planted and then left alone to wither and die without adequate instruction or pastoral oversight. Many congregations simply did not possess men capable of assuming leadership in the church without some degree of guidance.

Fanning kept plugging away for the "natural" system. He asserted that the idea of a man's holding a position in the church by appointment, or performing a duty by virtue of his appointment, was a Romish-Protestant (a happy combination) notion--a denominational doctrine of investiture.[44] He felt that God ordains some men by nature and grace to act as leaders. Men were to be regarded as rulers and leaders in the churches solely on account of their qualifications as evinced in actual labor.[45] B. K. Smith seconded Fanning:

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[42] "Letters on Church Edification, No. 4," Gospel Advocate, X (Jan., 1869), 37.

[43] See the Christian Standard, IV (1869).

[44] "Letters on Church Edification, No. 5," Gospel Advocate, XI (Jan., 1869), 87.

> As to the practice, which is becoming every year more and more prevalent, of setting apart young men ... to something called the evangelical office, and turning them loose upon the world and the church, inflated with the idea that they have thus acquired a Divine right to lord it over the churches wherever they go . . . I have no words to express properly my apprehensions.[46]

Jacob Creath used the pages of the Advocate to spread his opinion that the placing of a preacher over the local elders in the church was the first foundation stone of the papacy and a virtual displacement of the elders.[47] He wrote: "It is an innovation on apostolic order, it is a corruption of it, it is an addition to it, which subjects those who do it to the malediction in Revelations xxii."[48]

In spite of this spirited opposition, by 1872 the settled pastorate had been generally accepted among the churches though no distinction was made as yet between clergy and laity.[49] David Lipscomb, however, was never one to back down from a losing battle or abandon a lost cause. He stood like a rock and as late as 1882, he was still denying that the pastoral system was scriptural.[50] J. H. Garrison, the editor of the Christian-Evangelist, was willing to concede that "mutual edification" was a good thing, but he felt if a congregation lacked a man who could speak for edification it would be better to have a pastor.[51]

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[45] Ibid.

[46] "Louisville Meeting, No. XIII," Gospel Advocate, XI (March, 1869), 277.

[47] "One Overseer over a Plurality of Overseers in one, two, or three Churches," Gospel Advocate, XI (April, 1869), 302.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Peacock, p. 18.

Money occupied a large place in the editorial discussion of the pastorate. The Disciples had a heritage from the Christian Baptist days of being suspicious of men who preached for money. The question constantly arose: "Should the preacher, or pastor, be paid?" As might be expected, Tolbert Fanning was opposed to the "salary system."[52] (Fanning had a tendency to label everything he opposed a "system".) He was not opposed to financial support for a preacher, but he recommended faith instead of an agreement. In reply to a query from John T. Johnson, Fanning wrote:

> As to salaries to teachers, we have always opposed them in Franklin College. At the close of each year, for twelve, the teachers have endeavored to determine the

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[50] "Bro. Metcalfe's Questions Answered," Gospel Advocate, XXIV (Dec., 1882), 806.

[51] "Doubtful Tests of Fellowship," Christian-Evangelist, XX (April, 1883), 4.

[52] Tolbert Fanning, "Reply," Gospel Advocate, II (June, 1856), 170.

> comparative value of each one's service, and the settlements have been made accordingly. We have had no difficulty.[53]

Twenty-six years later the Advocate still believed that the same practice would work among the churches.[54]

As long as he lived, Alexander Campbell was opposed to paying preachers. In reply to a letter from J. Epps in the British Millennial Harbinger asking the question: "Is it the duty of Christian Churches to support their pastors?" Campbell answered "No!"[55] Campbell wondered in print for what they might be paid: shepherding? selling the flock? teaching? watching? visiting the sick? Campbell regarded all these things as the common duties of the membership.[56]

Old Jacob Creath felt a preacher should support himself by his own labor: "The teachers among the old Christians, in the pure ages of the church were farmers, shoemakers, machinists, vinedressers, etc."[57] Creath, writing in the Advocate, did a series on the ministry in which he constantly cited the words of the Christian Baptist. He wrote:

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[53] "Reply to J. T. Johnson," Gospel Advocate, II (Oct., 1856), 308.

[54] See "Bro. Metcalfe's Questions Answered," Gospel Advocate, XXIV (Dec., 1882), 806.

[55] "Is It the Duty of Christians to Support their Pastors?" Millennial Harbinger, Series V, III (July, 1860), 374.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Jacob Creath, "The Teachings of Elder Jacob Creath on the Eldership, No. 1," Gospel Advocate, XI (June, 1869), 519.

> To justify these pastors in the large cities with salaries, some of our wise men have invented the childish notion of two classes of elders, as well as the sheepish pastorals, an idea that never entered such heads as A. Campbell, W. Scott, or Paul.[58]

As might be expected, the Standard was definitely in favor of paying the preachers a regular and adequate salary. Errett carried on a written debate with the Bible Index, a Canadian periodical, on the matter.[59] Some of the reasons given for paying pastors appeared in the Advocate in an article signed "F":

> 1. The laborer is worthy his hire.
> 2. Education costs money.
> 3. Books and periodicals, the pastor's tools, cost money.
> 4. His hunger requires more than praise.
> 5. The congregation appreciates what it pays for.
> 6. Payment encourages young men.[60]

This could have been written by Fanning who was not opposed to paying preaching brethren; he was just opposed to a set agreement between a man and the church. Isaac Errett wrote:

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[58] "The Teachings of Elder Jacob Creath on the Eldership, No. 2," Gospel Advocate, XI (June, 1869), 537.

[59] "Are the Churches Prohibited from Paying Rulers and Teachers?" Christian Standard, IX (April, 1874), 108.

[60] "Paying Young Preachers," Gospel Advocate, XI (July, 1869), 659.

> When men like James Challen, Robert Graham, W. L. Hayden, William Baxter, . . . and a host of others equally worthy are denounced as hirelings . . . all sober-minded men who know of their toils will condemn not only the conclusion, but the logic that leads to it.[61]

DeGroot has pointed out that the influence of the "settled pastor" argument left traces which still persist and have created a sub-division of the Churches of Christ.[62] However persistent the question among the most conservative element, the issue ceased to be relevant among the Disciples by the 1870's and 1880's. Garrison claims that the issue was settled by experience rather than by argument.[63] That the settled pastorate was a cultural trend is

> demonstrated by the fact that the churches which felt the need of pastors, under whatever name, had them. Churches which either . . . did not want a minister or could not afford to have one continued to call the one man system an innovation.[64]

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[61] "Are the Churches Prohibited from Paying Rulers and Teachers?" Christian Standard, IX (April, 1874), 124.

[62] A. T. DeGroot, The Grounds of Divisions Among the Disciples of Christ (Chicago: Privately Printed, 1940), p. 125.

[63] W. E. Garrison, Whence and Whither, Disciples of Christ (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1948), p. 41.

[64] Oliver Read Whitley, Trumpet Call of Reformation (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1959), p. 145.

J. N. Sands, writing in the Christian Leader in 1893, illustrated this cultural cleavage based on financial ability when he classed the settled pastor in the same grouping with costly church buildings and fine carpets. He considered the whole trend a shift from rural to urban culture and a subsequent patterning after the "sects" in the city churches.[65]

The Organ Controversy

The introduction of a melodeon, or an organ, into the worship of some of the Disciples churches created a great deal of controversial literature and, like the introduction of the settled pastorate, raised the cry of "Innovation!" among some editors. The organ has come, however erroneously, to be considered the principal difference between the present-day Churches of Christ and the Disciples of Christ. It was, however, something concrete around which support could rally and which the opposition could decry. The introduction of the use of a musical instrument in worship was the question and is important not just of itself, but as another indication of the cleavage in the basic thinking of the Disciples. Many who entered into the controversy sincerely wished to avoid it but found that they could not. The liberal attitude was best expressed by Benjamin Franklin (who later reversed himself and became one of the most adamant opponents of the organ) in 1850 when there was some question over the propriety of lining out a hymn before singing it. Franklin wrote:

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[65] J. N. Sands, Christian Leader (Aug. 1, 1893), I, quoted in DeGroot, p. 125.

> The difference between lining out a hymn and singing without thus lining is a small enough thing for sectarians to dispute about, but infinitely too small for Bible alone men.[66]

Supporters of the right to have an organ in the worship service of the church seldom advanced positive arguments, but contented themselves with decrying the "littleness" of the opposition.

The principal opponents of the organ were the Gospel Advocate and the American Christian Review. The supporters were the Christian Standard and the Christian. The problem did not arise in the churches until the 1860's, since none of the Disciples churches had a musical instrument prior to that time. Franklin wrote in 1860 concerning instrumental music in the church:

> It is conformity to the world--idle aping of sectarians. Christ, the Apostles, or the early church did not countenance it. It is a clap-trap arrangement to cater to

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[66] "Remarks," Proclamation and Reformer, I (Mar., 1850), 158.

> the taste of those who have not the love of God in them.[67]

In his best sarcastic vein, he admitted that instrumental music might be admitted to a church in the following circumstances: (1) if the church lost, or never had, the spirit of Christ; (2) if the church has a preacher who does not have the spirit and is dry and lifeless; (3) if the church intends being a fashionable society [italics his]; (4) if a large number of dishonest and corrupt men need soothing--refined men with refined ears; and (5) if the church has given up all idea of trying to save the world.[68]

L. L. Pinkerton, whose church at Midway, Kentucky, was the first among the Disciples to install an organ, took exception to Franklin's view. He felt "editors enjoy privileges altogether peculiar."[69] "By the way," Franklin replied, "we would rather let him have his plaything in the church than have him so much out of sorts again, but we have no use for it and shall give it no countenance."[70] The argument of Franklin has not been essentially improved upon in the years since 1863:

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[67] "Instrumental Music in Churches," American Christian Review, III (Jan., 1860), 19.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Benjamin Franklin, "Instrumental Music in Churches," American Christian Review, III (Feb., 1860), 34.

[70] Ibid.

> The difference between instrumental music and singing with the human voice, in the worship of Christians, is simply that the latter is authorized in the Christian Scriptures and the former is not. We go for what is authorized, and not for what is not.[71]

Franklin's understanding of New Testament authorization was frequently irrational in that some things, such as hymnals, stoves, etc. were blithely accepted, while others were violently rejected. Moses E. Lard agreed with Franklin and wrote:

> The principle is that the New Testament is the standard, and what does not have the sanction of the standard is not permitted. Now in the light of the foregoing principles what defense can be urged for the introduction into some of our congregations of instrumental music? The answer which thunders into my ears from every page of the New Testament, is none.[72]

How silence could thunder in the ears of Moses E. Lard or anyone else is at least debatable, and so also was the question of whether scriptural silence was positively prohibitory or left the matter one of discretion. The organ question caused the Disciples to re-examine the old motto: "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; and where the

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[71] "Organ Worship--Instrumental Music in Churches," American Christian Review, VI (Oct., 1863), 158.

[72] "Instrumental Music in Churches and Dancing," Lard's Quarterly, I (March, 1864), 331.

Scriptures are silent, we are silent." Was that silence to be absolute or simply a silence of authority, leaving room for loud, but unauthoritative, opinions?

W. K. Pendleton was primarily interested in advancing congregational singing when he wrote: "Congregational singing is the prime privilege of the church. Nothing should be introduced which would destroy or abridge this."[73] Pendleton admitted that no one claimed a pretense of primitive authority for the instrument. He liked it, personally, but would rather never hear one again than interfere with congregational singing.

J. W. McGarvey also opposed the organ. His answer to those who asserted that whatever was practiced in Jewish worship may be carried over into Christian worship provided the New Testament did not positively condemn it was that it was simply an inadmissible argument.[74] Pendleton, editor of the Harbinger, was worried by 1865 over the heat generated by the organ controversy. He wondered if the fight ought not to be against melodeons instead of organs, anyway, since this was the cheap instrument most churches were buying.[75] He finally came out flatly against the organ but not on Biblical grounds. He opposed it because he felt it led to the use of "high flown" music the congregation could not comprehend.[76] Charles Louis Loos agreed that no innovation should be introduced but suggested (either pedantically or whimsically) that if some music other than the human voice must be had, it should be trumpets and flutes as were used in Solomon's temple.[77]

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[73] "Pew-Renting and Organ Music," Millennial Harbinger, Series V, VII (Mar., 1864), 127.

[74] J. W. McGarvey, "Instrumental Music in Churches," Millennial Harbinger, Series V, VII (Nov., 1864), 512.

Though Benjamin Franklin argued strongly against the organ on the basis of Biblical silence on the matter, his real objection probably was sociological. Franklin was for simple church buildings, for plain people, and against all show of extravagance and worldly pomp.[78] He was not alone in considering the organ an evidence of worldliness. Loos, co-editor of the Harbinger, wrote concerning the church in St. Louis: "The acquisition of wealth, especially as in the above case in a fortuitous way, makes us do things, and be, what before that, all our lives, we have been praying and preaching against."[79] With all this editorial opposition, churches still persisted in installing organs as soon as they could afford them. Franklin considered his opposition a matter of vital principle.

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[75] "Instrumental Music in Churches," Millennial Harbinger, XXXVI (Jan., 1865), 40.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Charles Louis Loos, "Music in Churches," Millennial Harbinger, XXXVI (Feb., 1865), 92.

[78] "Our Visit in St. Louis," American Christian Review, X (Feb., 1867), 52.

> As sure as the Bible is a divine book we are right and they are wrong. Of this we entertain not one doubt, and have not from the commencement of the controversy. There can be no compromise on "great and sacred principle." We will not worship with the instrument! It is the opening of the door for all innovation and for apostacy.[80]

Franklin pointed out that the organ was a recent introduction and not over fifty churches had adopted it by 1868.[81] He did not condemn the instrument as such, but he remarked seriously: "It is not a Christian and cannot sing with spirit and understanding, therefore it cannot worship and therefore it has no place in the church."[82] The inconsistency of excluding the organ but not the hymnal escaped him. He added:

> Any change, improvement, modification, or

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[79] "Dr. Christopher's Address on Instrumental Music in Worship," Millennial Harbinger, XXXVIII (Sept., 1867), 573 [sic, should be 473].

[80] "Instrumental Music in Worship," American Christian Review, XI (Feb., 1868), 44.

[81] "Notes By the Way," American Christian Review, XI (May, 1868), 156.

[82] Ibid.

> compliance required by the gospel, or according to the gospel, we will stand by and advocate. But changing and modifying "according to the varying conditions of society and other considerations," is simply departing from Jesus. We desire not to maintain that the gospel is inflexible, but we desire to stand up inflexibly to it. . . .[83]

The supporters of the use of the organ invariably based their argument on the consideration of the whole matter as one of expediency, in which there could legitimately be freedom of opinion. The pages of the Harbinger were open to these men. Pendleton's opposition to the organ was as an expedient, not as a matter of inflexible principle.[84] He was interested in keeping the distinction between faith and opinion. He believed that opinion was a matter of freedom while it was held as a personal possession, but if made into a rule of faith and practice and enacted into a law of social life, he believed that it could become bad. He desired to close the discussion in 1869 because he felt it had degenerated into quibbles. He wrote:

> Let it be remembered too, that heresy is more likely to consist in the use we make of an opinion, than in the par-

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[83] "Bro. A. S. Hayden's Correction," American Christian Review, XI (Aug., 1868), 252.

[84] "Remarks," Millennial Harbinger, XXXIX (Oct., 1868), 553.

ticular doctrine of the opinion.[85]

These were truly remarkable words coming from a Disciples editor.

The organ question led to a ludicrous situation in at least one Disciples congregation. The church at Seventeenth and Olive Streets in St. Louis had difficulty. An organ had been purchased and introduced into the worship of the church by a majority of seventy-six members over the violent protest of a minority. A committee, consisting of Isaac Errett, Alexander Procter, Robert Graham, and Joseph Rogers, was appointed with the consent of both parties to arbitrate the matter. The committee found that the introduction of the organ, while not wrong in itself, was in this case a violation of the law of love and directed that the use of the organ be revoked and the minority which had opposed it should return to the fold of the church.[86] The majority then moved out into rented space, and the result of the whole affair was the pro-organ group worshipping in a building without an organ while the anti-organ group worshipped in a building with an organ (unused, of course).

A recurring objection against the use of the organ in worship was that it was necessarily an imposition of private opinion on the whole congregation. Franklin wrote that every church adopting an organ automatically made it a term of fellowship, since one who opposed it must either listen to it or leave the social worship of the church.[87] The *Apostolic Times* of Lexington, Kentucky, agreed.[88] A subscriber asked Franklin why, since he was opposed to all innovations and especially organs, his periodical carried advertisements for the instrument. Franklin replied that he did object to the organ, but to its use in worship. The organ, he felt, was not an instrument of worship since it "neither *sings, speaks, teaches*, nor *admonishes*."[89]

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[85] "Melodeons, Expediency and the Sabbath," Millennial Harbinger, XL (Mar., 1869), 174.

[86] "The St. Louis Decision," Evangelist, VI (Feb., 16, 1871), 1.

Barton Johnson, editor of the *Evangelist*, considered the use or non-use of the organ a matter of expediency. He pointed out that the issue was still a live and growing one in 1875 after fifteen years of controversy.[90] Johnson opened the columns of the *Evangelist* to a discussion of the organ question in March 1875 but closed them to the discussion just five months later because "the discussion then commenced, especially as pertaining to some of the disputants, was rapidly running into personalities and unprofitable disputes. . . ."[91] It would have been better had other Disciple editors adopted Johnson's position.

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[87] Benjamin Franklin, [no title], *American Christian Review*, XVIII (June, 1875), 204 and "Question of Fellowship," *American Christian Review*, XVIII (Oct., 1875), 316.

[88] "The Organ a Term of Communion," *Apostolic Times*, VI (Aug. 20, 1874), 6.

[89] "Explanation," *American Christian Review*, XVIII (Jan., 1875), 4.

[90] "Instrumental Music in the Church," *Evangelist*, X (Mar., 1875), 68.

A free press and the open discussion of both sides of any and all issues confronting the churches was one of the greatest strengths of the Disciples as a democratic body. The freedom of the press was liable to abuse, however, and almost invariably the tendency on any controversial issue was to drag out the debate long after all original arguments had been exhausted and the disputants reduced to quibbling over minor points and personalities. This happened in the controversy over the organ. The same arguments and replies occupied the pages of the periodicals for more than a generation and still occupy the pages of some periodicals. An excellent example of this degeneration from discussion to nit-picking and innuendo is found in Franklin's connection of the organ party with dancers, horse racers, card players, people of loose morals, and the unsound in gospel teaching.[92] This condemnation by association would have been bad enough coming from some little local sheet edited by an obscure man, but it was symptomatic of the sickness which infected unlicensed Disciple journalism when it came from one of the most widely circulated periodicals edited by a prominent and venerable leader.

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[91] "Instrumental Music in the Church," Evangelist, X (Aug., 1875), 253.

The Apostolic Times, edited by J. W. McGarvey, L. B. Wilkes, and R. C. Cave, all prominent leaders in the Disciples, was opposed to the use of the organ. An editorial in the Times stated: "An innovation is not merely something new, but it is something not provided for in the system into which it is introduced, and which produces a material change in that system."[93] The Times felt the use of the organ was clearly an innovation, while the use of houses of worship and hymn books was not, since the organ introduced a change in worship utterly unprovided for by apostolic precept and practice, a specious argument at best. Recognizing this, others asserted that houses of worship and hymn books were not provided for by apostolic precept and practice either, but the Times countered that homes provided a necessary place in which to meet and hymnals provided the necessary hymns with which to praise God, and both meeting and praising were a part of the apostolic precept and practice.[94] Mrs. Alexander Campbell felt that instrumental music had crept into the church with other corruptions and regarded its use as a rejection of "spiritual worship."[95]

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[92] [no title], American Christian Review, XVIII (June, 1875), 204.

[93] "Innovations," Apostolic Times, VII (Oct., 1875), 451.

Franklin refused to admit that the organ could be a matter of expediency rather than principle. He did not approve of congregations voting on the matter. He wrote: "We care nothing about a majority in the prescribed worship."[96] To him it was not a question upon which the congregation had a right to vote. He advised his readers not to unite with a church that used the organ and, if already a member when one was introduced, simply to ask for their letter and move.[97] As to the argument that the silence of the Bible gave leeway for the organ's use, he answered:

> We need no language excluding instrumental music in worship, infant baptism and sprinkling for baptism, in the scripture

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[94] Ibid.

[95] Mrs. Alexander Campbell, "Adam Clark on Instrumental Music," Christian, XIII (Oct., 1875), 2.

[96] "Practical Ideas," American Christian Review, XXI (Feb., 1878), 52.

[97] Ibid.

> for they never were included . . . it
> is impossible to exclude anything that
> never was included.[98]

By 1878, however, even Franklin was tired of the organ controversy.[99]

The proponents of the use of the organ were remarkably silent until after the storm had mostly blown over. Not until the latter part of the 1870's and the early 1880's did many articles in defense of the practice appear. One gets the impression that the practice gained a foothold in Disciple churches as a result of social change rather than open debate. Even the proponents of the organ were hesitant to advance positive arguments (with the exception of George P. Slade, who maintained stoutly against all comers that there was positive command for the use of the organ in the New Testament[100]) but contented themselves with asserting that the use of the organ was a matter of free choice. The Advocate and the Review, in the early years of the controversy, were fulminating against the practice itself more than against a defense of the practice in other periodicals. While the Disciples were led by their editors in many areas of development, the introduction of the organ came not at the instigation of the editors but in spite of their vigorous opposition.

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[98] *Ibid.*

[99] "Enough of It," *American Christian Review*, XXI (Feb., 1878), 66.

[100] See *American Christian Review*, XXI (Mar., 1878), 101.

Garrison entered the controversy gingerly in 1878, urging churches everywhere not to let the organ and the choir displace congregational singing.[101] In this, he was echoing the fear expressed by Pendleton in the Harbinger a decade earlier. Commenting on the argument in the Apostolic Times that church music was superior without an organ, Garrison wrote: "The use of the organ in the church must stand or fall by the test of its usefulness."[102] Garrison believed that the organ was on trial and agreed that if better congregational music could be made without the organ, it should be abandoned. It should be noted, however, that like Pendleton he refused to make it a matter of inflexible principle as did Fanning and Franklin. Garrison pointed out that there were three positions among the brethren on the organ question:

> 1. That the Scriptures, properly understood, require the use of an organ;
> 2. That the use of the organ is an unauthorized violation of the fundamental principles of our reformatory plea; and
> 3. That the question is one of propriety,

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[101] "The Difference," Christian, XVI (April 18, 1878), 4.

[102] "Pen and Scissors," Christian, XVI (Aug. 29, 1878), 5.

> or expediency, to be decided by the various congregations themselves on the principles of Christian love and forbearance.[103]

Garrison adopted the third position as did virtually all among the Disciples who were not positively anti-organ. He felt that singing was an important and integral part of the worship of the church and whatever aided it was left to the common sense of people in the different ages.[104] The only question for him was whether the organ actually aided the singing. He carried on an extensive written discussion with O. A. Carr in which he defended the freedom to use the organ on the basis of "sanctified common sense,"[105] a term that has found frequent use among the Disciples since then.

A writer asked Garrison if the organ was an innovation. He replied:

> 1. Any change in the established or customary order of things is an innovation. In this sense the organ is an innovation, as are notes and hymnbooks. Innovation is not necessarily evil in itself.
> 2. The organ has been the occasion of hurtful controversies. However, not the organ

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[103] "Let It Dry," Christian, XVI (Nov. 21, 1878), 5.

[104] "Hymn-Book Argument," Christian, XVI (Dec. 5, 1878), 5.

[105] "As It Now Stands," Christian, XVI (Dec. 24, 1878), 3.

> but the intemperate zeal of the brethren on both sides has been the real source of trouble.
> 3. The question is one of expediency, to be settled by practical influence on congregational music by every congregation for itself.[106]

By 1879 Garrison was writing that he was done with the organ controversy except to be heard for liberty if anyone tried to make a creed of it.[107]

Isaac Errett and the Christian Standard occupied virtually the same position Garrison had adopted in the Christian. Like Garrison, Errett was late getting into the controversy, but the two periodicals stood side by side in upholding the liberal position. They were the only two important Disciples periodicals to do so, and they found their influence ranged against the Advocate and the Review. Errett wrote in reply to a letter from Samuel Ayres:

> The only essays we ever wrote on the question of instrumental music in the churches, were written to establish two positions: 1. That the prevailing differences on this question were differences of opinion; and could not, therefore, in consistency with our principles, be allowed to interfere with Christian fellowship. 2. That while the use or non-use of the organ should not disturb Christian fellowship, the law of love requires a waiving of preferences and a surrender of cherished opinion when the unity,

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[106] "Questions and Answers," Christian, XIV (Dec. 27, 1877), 4.

[107] "Review," Christian, XVI (Feb., 1879), 3.

> peace and prosperity of the church call for such a surrender. We have never seen reason to abandon or modify these positions.[108]

Errett failed to see that the organ had anything to do with a religious ordinance or that its use was any more an act of worship than the use of other expedients such as the tuning fork, or the hymn book.[109] As to the organ's being the opening wedge for all sorts of innovation, Errett wrote:

> The cry, "And then comes Popery," is an old cry. Popery was seen looming above the horizon by those who were opposed to singing. It is doubtless as sincere an alarm, and we judge just as needless, in regard to the organ.[110]

Errett was concerned about the possibility of division as a result of the organ dispute. He strongly criticized the Review for voicing the opinion that the organ would produce organic (no pun intended) division.[111] He wrote:

> The plea for Christian Union which we have in hand calls for a largeness of heart

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[108] "Opinions as Terms of Fellowship," Christian Standard, XV (Mar., 1880), 92.

[109] Ibid.

[110] "Opinions as Terms of Fellowship," Christian Standard, XV (Mar., 1880), 92. See also "The Way to Settle It," Christian-Evangelist, XXIV (June, 1887), 354. Garrison did not feel the organ would lead to "incense, candles, bells, and holy water."

[111] "Is There to be a Disunion Movement?" Christian Standard, XV (April, 1880), 116.

> and an enthusiasm which will not allow us to fritter away our strength on questions of opinion, or dishonor our principles by schismatic movements.[112]

Errett correctly pointed out that when the Review opposed the organ on the grounds that it promoted dissension, division, and schism, it was using the same argument of expediency used by the promoters of the organ and that some of the most saintly men had gone to the extreme of opposing the use of notes in hymnals on the same ground.[113] The Review denied that it would declare "non-fellowship" on the basis of the organ, but Errett refused to accept the truth of the denial and continued to accuse the periodical of leading a "disunion movement."[114] The fear of division continued, and three years later David Lipscomb noted in the Advocate that the Standard had claimed to have received information that a secret conclave composed of J. F. Rowe, A. Ellmore, Kincaid, and others was prepared to meet at a signal and declare non-fellowship with those churches persisting in the use of organs, societies, etc.[115] Lipscomb added: "We have not doubted separation will come, with innovations being added, indeed ought to come."[116] It was a prophetic statement; the fears of Errett were well-founded. Errett wrote that the erection of this difference into a test of fellowship was contrary to the principles of the Disciples and schismatic in character.[117]

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[112] "Opinions as Terms of Fellowship," Christian Standard, XV (Mar., 1880), 92.

[113] "Organs and Tuning Forks," Christian Standard, XV (May, 1880), 148.

[114] "The Disunion Movement," Christian Standard, XV (May, 1880), 148.

[115] "Union and Schism," Gospel Advocate, XXV (Dec., 1883), 822.

One Biblically-oriented opponent claimed the organ was not in a class with the tuning fork and the hymnal since the latter two were not instruments of music, and the prophet Amos had said "woe to those who invent to themselves instruments of music."[118] In his reply Errett simply asked him about the same text which also pronounces woe on those who eat lambs out of the flock and calves out of the midst of the stall.[119]

The *Old Path Guide* was also opposed to the *Standard* on the organ issue. By then (1880), Errett was thoroughly tired of the whole argument. Replying to the censures of the *Guide*, he wrote: "For ourselves we have no fondness for the organ nor any musical taste that would be sacrificed or injured if an organ were never played again while the world stands."[120] He was unwilling, however, to abandon the field to those who would unnecessarily restrict the Disciples' freedom, since he considered the use of the organ as an auxiliary to worship for more effective singing.[121] He pointed out that many churches which opposed the organ had singing only by the choir and the proper use of the organ could restore congregational singing to its rightful place, provided the organist and the choir were kept to the use of old, familiar hymns.[122]

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[116] *Ibid.*

[117] Isaac Errett, "Samuel Ayres on the Organ," *Christian Standard*, XVI (Mar., 1881), 100.

[118] Isaac Errett, "Organs and Tuning Forks," *Christian Standard*, XV (May, 1880), 148.

[119] *Ibid.*

One of the more persistent arguments of the anti-organ forces was that its use was evidence of fashionable desire. Errett denied this, asserting that the use of the organ sprang from a marked revolution in sacred music. He pointed out that the old style melodies had given place to tunes marked more by harmony than by melody and with this change came the demand for the organ.[123]

Opponents of the organ, according to Errett, said its use was acceptable in secular music but became a sin when church music was involved. This dichotomy irked him: "We are at war with this whole conception of Christian life."[124] Just as he had refused to admit a sharp distinction between sacred and secular in the debate over the Society's role in the Civil War, so he refused to admit this kind of distinction in the realm of sacred and secular music. Errett concluded his argument by urging a cessation of strife and an adoption of forbearance. He wrote: "We hold no brief for or against. Let every church decide."[125]

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[120] "Our Plea for Union," Christian Standard, XV (Aug., 1880), 260.

[121] Isaac Errett, "Samuel Ayres on the Organ," Christian Standard, XVI (April, 1881), 108.

[122] "Choirs and Organs," Christian Standard, XV (June, 1880), 196.

[123] Isaac Errett, "Samuel Ayres on the Organ," Christian Standard, XVI (Mar., 1881), 100.

J. H. Garrison, editor of the Christian-Evangelist, successor to the Christian, supported Errett in urging forbearance. In 1887 he wrote, in an editorial entitled, "The Way to Settle It," that a congregation divided on the issue had three acceptable courses: (1) the acceptance of majority rule after careful consideration; (2) the alternate use and non-use of the organ; and (3) peaceable separation, not to be considered division, with mutual recognition of each other as Christian by both parties.[126] As to the argument of the Apostolic Times, which was anti-organ and pro-society on the basis that they were a different class of question since the Society could be supported individually, Garrison responded: "Let the anti-organ brethren sing in their 'individual capacity' when they are present with an organ. That is the way a great many of us sing anyway."[127]

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[124] Isaac Errett, "Samuel Ayres on the Organ," Christian Standard, XVI (April, 1881), 116.

[125] Ibid.

[126] "The Way to Settle It," Christian-Evangelist, XXIV (May, 1887), 275.

By 1887 the organ debate had come to a stand-still and a stand-off. Articles on the subject continued to appear after that date, but infrequently. It was no longer a live issue, and a wide divergence remained between the position of the Standard and the Christian-Evangelist on one side and the Advocate and the Review on the other. The Millennial Harbinger had long since ceased publication. Individual congregations continued to install organs as their financial ability and social environment dictated or refused to countenance the organ on a doctrinal basis.[128]

Daniel Sommer, the intensely conservative editor of the Octographic Review, successor to the American Christian Review, wrote in 1897:

> As times advanced, such of those churches as assembled in large towns and cities gradually became proud, or at least sufficiently worldly-minded to desire popularity, and in order to attain that un-

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[127] Christian-Evangelist, XXIV (June, 1887), 354.

[128] For a local situation, see Brooks Major, "Origin of the Local Churches of Christ," Gleaner, I (Nov., 1964), 6-10.

> scriptural end they adopted certain popular arrangements such as the hired pastor, the church choir, instrumental music, man-made societies to advance the gospel and human devices to raise money . . . in doing so they divided the brotherhood of the Disciples.[129]

The Disciples changed with the rest of society and innovations were introduced. The idea of a settled pastorate and the use of an organ in the worship service were two of the changes which created the most dissension. For the introduction of either, the Disciple editors cannot be blamed or praised. In the matter of innovation, they were much more inclined to follow than to lead or, if not to follow, to react. The majority of the editors reacted to these changes as a father reacts to a threat against his daughter's purity. They were unable, however, to stay the natural course of events. With the death of Benjamin Franklin in 1878, the influence of the Review waned rapidly. The Advocate, however, became even more the organ of the "anti's". A local congregation was apt, when division came, to assume the position of its leadership, and the position of its leadership depended upon which periodical it subscribed to and read. The periodical as well as the Bible was a tool of the preacher's trade.

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[129] Harrell, "The Sectional Origins . . .", p. 277, quoting "Signs of the Times," Octographic Review, XL (Oct. 25, 1897), 1.

CHAPTER V

ONE ALONE OR ONE AMONG MANY: COMMUNION AND FEDERATION

The Open Communion Question

Since the Disciples originated with the intent to restore the primitive church in all its pristine simplicity, they regarded their movement as simply "the church" without any of the addenda of the intervening centuries between the apostolic age and the nineteenth century. This was one reason the more conservative editors battled so manfully against the introduction of anything new into the church, such as the settled pastorate and the use of an instrument in worship. This attitude also had a profound effect on the relationship between the Disciples and other churches, especially since Christian unity shared with the restoration of the primitive church the principal focus of Disciples motivation. Early Disciples leaders regarded the movement as more catholic than Protestant and felt that the whole of Christendom could unite on the basic essentials of Christianity. Others, however, failed to interpret basic essentials in the same manner as the Disciples and, except for the early union of the Stone and Campbell movements (1832), the thrust toward Christian union failed to produce any visible results. In fact, the immediate result was in the opposite direction. Since Disciples regarded themselves as simply "the church" they proselyted freely among other denominations and rejoiced over additions from the "sects," as they called the denominations, quite as much as they did converts from the "world." This attitude produced an immediate antagonism on the part of their neighbors. The method of holding public debates on all religious questions, especially the mode of baptism, which the Disciples developed to as fine a point as they did their journalism, also failed to endear them to the religious community. There was a "come ye out from among them" attitude among the Disciples that was typical of sectarian emphasis.

From the 1830's throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century there were continuous informal, though half-hearted, attempts at union with the Baptists. These discussions never got beyond the pages of the periodicals or the dreams of a few ardent unionists. Nothing specific of a formal nature was ever attempted or accomplished. Perhaps the reason was that many Disciples sincerely doubted that other denominations were "the church" at all. Most would freely admit that there were Christians among the others, but this was coupled with a feeling that the image of the church was so blurred by innovations, corruptions, and additions to the primitive pattern by the denominations that they could not be considered valid churches of Christ. This question of the relationship of the Disciples to the other churches was widely discussed in the periodicals in the 1870's and 1879's. The issue was whether Disciples were to have a policy of open communion or close communion.

Tolbert Fanning, writing in the Gospel Advocate in 1856, could find neither open nor close communion in the New Testament. He believed that communion was the duty of all baptized (by this, he and all other Disciples meant "immersed") Christians and the privilege of no one else. He believed that Disciples could neither invite anyone to partake nor debar anyone from partaking, since the table belonged to the Lord and no one else had any authority over it. He added: "If this is close communion, we are disposed to advocate it with all our powers."[1] The attitude of Fanning toward the communion was basically the attitude of all Disciples throughout the nineteenth century. They neither invited, nor debarred, but placed full responsibility upon the participant. This attitude did not change, and the remarkable thing is that quite a debate arose among the editors, all of whom were in essential agreement. While the issue of open and close communion was the overt question, the real issue was whether the Disciples were justified in having any relationship at all with other denominations.

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[1] "Close Communion," Gospel Advocate, II (Nov., 1856), 343.

Benjamin Franklin's attitude was basically the same as that of Fanning. He wrote: "It is not our duty to invite nor debar any, but to state that it is the Lord's Table and for his people, and if any partake who are not his people, the matter is between them and the Lord."[2] Franklin felt that each man should examine himself on the communion matter. Most Disciples agreed in this abdication of ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the communion: none would agree to such an abdication in the matter of baptism, however, and the difference in attitude toward the two ordinances among the American churches struck the British churches as scandalous.

The controversy over communion was touched off by the action of the British churches. In 1859 the British churches in their annual meeting at Birmingham adopted a resolution inquiring about the truth of a rumor that the American churches admitted unbaptized persons to the Lord's table.[3] (One should bear in mind that throughout the whole controversy the Disciples in both Britain and America always considered baptism and immersion as synonymous.) In reply to this query, Alexander Campbell wrote: "We neither invite nor debar."[4] The British Millennial Harbinger then proceeded to print a number of articles condemning the American practice as tantamount to open communion. The practice in the British churches was, and has remained, the same basically as the practice among Southern Baptist churches: only members are allowed to commune.

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[2] "Queries and Answers," American Christian Review, I (Dec., 1858), 195.

[3] "A Resolution adopted by the Annual Meeting of Christian Disciples held in Birmingham on 9th, 10th, and 11th, August, 1859," Millennial Harbinger, Series V, III (July, 1860), 407.

In response to the charge of observing open communion, Campbell wrote: "We have no such custom, neither the churches of God that were before us."[5] The issue soon became whether the American practice of neither inviting nor debarring people from the communion was practically a recognition of the validity of the "sects." In response to this, Isaac Errett wrote: "It [our plea] does not recognize sects, on human bases, as divine--but it recognizes a people of God among these sects, and seeks to call them out."[6] Errett considered the American Disciples' attitude of neither inviting nor debarring as essentially a teaching attitude. Emphasis was upon individual responsibility. He felt that fully two-thirds of the American churches occupied that position, though those congregations which were originally Baptist were rather more unyielding.[7]

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[4] Ibid., p. 408.

[5] "Christian Communion," Millennial Harbinger, Series V, IV (Aug., 1861), 429.

[6] "Communion with the 'Sects'," Millennial Harbinger, Series V, IV (Dec., 1861), 710.

The Harbinger carried a whole series of articles entitled "Communion with the 'Sects'" in the early 1860's written by different people in a thorough airing of the question. It was obvious from what Errett had written that not all the American churches were in agreement, but some had adopted the same practice as the British churches--that of positively excluding the unimmersed from the communion. This group remained a small minority and eventually departed from the American scene. Robert Richardson wrote:

> We neither discuss nor determine this question. We simply leave it to each individual to determine for himself. It is really, as the brethren . . . say, an "untaught question."[8]

By this Richardson meant there was no authority in the New Testament for either inviting or debarring one from the communion. He asserted the question could not have arisen "anterior to the apostacy. It is one, therefore, which we cannot Scripturally either discuss or decide."[9] Other

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[7] Ibid.

[8] "Communion with the 'Sects'," Millennial Harbinger, Series V, IV (Dec., 1861), 712.

[9] Ibid.

Disciple editors felt differently about the matter.

Benjamin Franklin presented letters and comments from several different leaders in the American Christian Review and summarized his own attitude in six pithy points:

> 1. Christians may not commune with the sects, which are heresies.
> 2. There are individual Christians among the sects.
> 3. We do not commune with the unimmersed.
> 4. When an unimmersed person communes, it is his act and his responsibility.
> 5. There is no such creature as an unimmersed Christian.
> 6. Our communion is neither open nor close.[10]

Franklin's attitude, as usual, was typical of the conservative position of the Disciples. He flatly denied the possibility of a person being a Christian without being immersed and violently objected to communion with the "sects" as such on the basis that it was a recognition of their right to exist. He would not, however, deny that there could be individual Christians among them and because of the impossibility of judging, thrust the responsibility away from the church and onto the individual himself. George W. Elley was a shade more conservative on the question than Franklin. Elley best represented the Baptist attitude among the Disciples--an attitude to which Isaac Errett had referred.[11] Elley felt that in neither inviting nor debarring people, the Disciples were simply abdicating their responsibility. He considered an unimmersed person an unsaved person, as did Franklin, but he felt an unsaved person should not, under any circumstances, be allowed to partake of the communion. He wrote that the church had no right to admit those whom Christ had plainly rejected.[12]

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[10] "Communion with the 'Sects'," American Christian Review, V (Jan. 21, 1862), 2.

Replying to Elley, W. K. Pendleton wrote that Elley was governed by logical inference from certain propositions and had no "thus saith the Lord" for his position. Pendleton added: "We establish no rule of faith unless we have either an express precept or a clearly defined precedent. In this matter, we have neither."[13]

Isaac Errett was worried about the spirit of exclusiveness manifested by some in the communion discussion. He wrote to Benjamin Franklin urging him not to damage the great plea for Christian union by a spirit of exclusiveness which

> will only allow of "supposed piety and Christianity" in neighboring denominations, which refuses to recognize as

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[11] See p. 195.

[12] "Communion with the 'Sects'," Millennial Harbinger, Series V, V (Jan., 1862), 39.

[13] "Communion with the 'Sects'," Millennial Harbinger, Series V, V (Feb., 1862), 60.

> Christians all the unimmersed. . . . A denominationalism more intense and more intolerant . . . would be difficult to conceive.[14]

Franklin could not agree with Errett or with Pendleton. In 1862 several issues of the Review were filled with discussion of the communion question. Franklin agreed that there were Christians among the sects and that those Christians could properly commune, but he objected to the fact that both Errett and Pendleton seemed to find their Christians principally among the unimmersed.[15] Franklin believed there was no such creature as an unimmersed Christian; that baptism was essential to church membership and to being a Christian.[16] He was not afraid, as was Errett, of appearing intolerant. Apparently the standard by which both Franklin and Elley judged the Christians among other denominations was immersion.

Like Franklin, Elley was disturbed by Isaac Errett's position. He replied:

> All to come! This is as liberal and as loose as the greatest latitudinarian in the land could desire. This door admits birds of every color and tribe. This is

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[14] Isaac Errett, "The Limits of Religious Fellowship," Millennial Harbinger, Series V, V (Mar., 1862), 131.

[15] "Review of Brethren Pendleton and Errett," American Christian Review, V (April 22, 1862), 2.

[16] Ibid.

> in direct violation of Paul's teaching to the Galatians: "Cast out the bond-woman and her son, for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free-woman."[17]

In response, Errett cited the Lunenberg Letter of 1837, a classic document in which Alexander Campbell refused to equate lack of immersion with heathenism.[18] He added: "It is refreshing to turn from the narrow logic and coarse dogmatism of small critics, to these utterances of a clear head, large heart, and sanctified spirit."[19] Errett did not have to go back to 1837 to find Campbell's views. Just a month before, Campbell had begun a series of articles in the Harbinger on "Communion."[20]

Pendleton was somewhat surprised at the excitement created by the communion question. He wondered who would say that Martin Luther, unimmersed, was not a Christian. He wrote:

> It seems that Bro. Franklin is reviving the old objections of the objectors of 1837, and, whether knowingly or not, stumbling at the same difficulties which

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[17] "The Communion Question," Millennial Harbinger, Series V, V (April, 1862), 176.

[18] Isaac Errett, "The Communion Question," Millennial Harbinger, Series V, V (May, 1862), 212.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Millennial Harbinger, Series V, V (April, 1862), 145.

> then stood in the way of some very perpendicular old ladies among the partizans of "John Thomas, M. D., not D. D."

The communion issue was discussed principally in the Harbinger and the Review. No one advocated open communion in the sense of an indiscriminate invitation to all present at the worship service to commune. Richardson, Errett, Pendleton, as well as Campbell, advocated the position of individual rather than ecclesiastical responsibility and refused either to invite or to debar. Franklin, Elley, and David King, editor of the British Millennial Harbinger, advocated refusing communion to all the unimmersed. It should be pointed out that Franklin had only recently come to this position in the heat of the controversy. He was more liberal in 1858.[22]

That the real issue was Disciple relationships with their religious neighbors rather than communion itself is evident from the words of Franklin:

> It will be seen that our trouble is not so much with the position of brethren Pendleton and Errett, when defined as we have done it, as with the arguments introduced to prove it. We do not anticipate any serious difficulty in our practice, or any particular change, in reference to communion; but we

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[21] "The Communion Question," Millennial Harbinger, Series V, V (May, 1862), 226.

[22] See p. 193.

> do anticipate difficulty with such arguments as they have resorted to in its defense.[23]

If the issue itself could not generate much steam among the Disciples, personalities could and did. By August of 1862 George Elley was publicly disgusted with Pendleton and Errett and managed somehow to find words to express his emotion--even coining a few:

> You have said that I am an "*upright* and *sensible* writer," and in proof of your admission, you now say that I am a "*quack doctor*," "ignorant of our history," a "*miserable scrapterion*," etc. This looks like feeding me with *sugar* with one hand, and then giving *gall* with the other. I fear that Bro. P. was sorely afflicted with a *sour stomach* when he wrote the above contradiction. A good cause never demands such weapons. From Bro. Errett I had the right to expect a reply full of *modesty*, a *refined taste*, and free from all *egotism* and *swaggering*! But alas! what disappointment! Bro. Franklin and myself are mere *tyros*, *ignoramuses*, *tomtits*, compared to him. He is indignant, and will not allow his opinions to be questioned by us.--Well, when a *big bug* is gored by "*small critics*," and *ants*, it is natural to look for some *swelling*.[24]

In a last defense, Elley admitted there were Christians among the sects but still denied their right to the Lord's

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[23] Benjamin Franklin, "The Communion Question," *Millennial Harbinger*, Series V, V (Aug., 1862), 365.

[24] "The Communion Question," *Millennial Harbinger*, Series V, V (Aug., 1862), 369. A diligent search of Pendleton's and Errett's articles failed to reveal their use of any such terms as Elley alluded to.

Table.[25] Pendleton, in reply to this diatribe, characterized Elley's article as "apologetic, explanatory, replicative, recriminative, reiterative, and, towards the close, a little funny."[26]

The Western Recorder, a Baptist periodical, took note of the controversy among the Disciples with ill-concealed glee in an article entitled, "The Reformation in Trouble on the Communion Question," which was reprinted in the Harbinger.[27]

Moses Lard managed to apply his usual iron-clad logic to the communion question. He wrote that the following particulars could be assumed: (1) immersion is necessary to constitute a man a Christian; (2) the kingdom of God is wholly distinct from the world; (3) the Lord's Supper exists wholly within the kingdom.[28] From the basis of these assumed propositions, Lard concluded that the unimmersed could not possibly commune anyway, but only seem to.[29] He did not consider mere sincerity enough and felt that a sprinkled man, however sincere, "cannot and does not commune."[30] Lard considered Pendleton inconsistent, speaking from the heart rather than the head, when he held there were pious Christians among the unimmersed. Lard argued that if baptism was essential, this position was illogical. He regretted that this implied a feeling of self-superiority among the Disciples, but believed that it could not be avoided.[31] He wrote:

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[25] Ibid.

[26] "Reply," Millennial Harbinger, Series V, V (Aug., 1862), 369.

[27] Quoted in the Millennial Harbinger, Series V, V (Oct., 1862), 459.

[28] "Do the Unimmersed Commune?" Lard's Quarterly, I (Sept., 1863), 42.

[29] Ibid., p. 44.

> I recognize no human being as a Christian who is not immersed. Men may call this by what name they see fit, it moves me not. It is my faith. . . . The inconsistency of Baptists recognizing others as Christians and not communing with them glares even on the mind of a half idiot, from very shallowness.[32]

Elijah Craig, editor of the Gospel Echo, agreed with Lard on the inconsistency of the Baptist position, but disagreed with him on judging who should and should not commune.[33] Craig wrote: "We know no 'open or close communion.' God's table is for his family, and his children were, in Paul's day, immersed Christians."[34]

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[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid., p. 47.

[32] Ibid., p. 49.

[33] "Communion," Gospel Echo, VII (May, 1869), 185.

[34] "Open Communion," Gospel Echo, V (April, 1867), 138.

The Gospel Advocate felt that eating and drinking with sinners encouraged their eating and drinking to the damnation of their souls.[35] Lipscomb wrote:

> We do not believe that unimmersed persons can rightly appropriate to themselves the privilege and promises of the children of God. They then have no right to the Lord's Supper, and cannot properly observe it.[36]

Lipscomb, like Craig, was willing to let the unimmersed err if it was made plain the responsibility was their own. He believed that the Disciples should make it plain to the unimmersed that they were not Christian; then if they took the communion with the Disciples anyway it was their sin.[37] Isaac Errett's position was virtually the same. Commenting in the Standard on a controversy among the Baptists on the communion question, Errett wrote:

> Logically and scripturally, we are convinced that it is disorderly for the unbaptized to share in any part of the worship of the church; but if of their own free will, they enter into it, the best we can do is enlighten them . . . and avail ourselves of their open ears to produce conviction.[38]

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[35] David Lipscomb, "Shall We Invite the World to Eat and Drink with Us at the Lord's Table?" Gospel Advocate, XII [sic] (Dec., 1869), 1187.

[36] "The Lord's Supper and Its Observance," Gospel Advocate, XIII (Oct., 1871), 991.

[37] Ibid.

[38] "Open and Close Communion," Christian Standard, X (Jan., 1875), 36.

The British Millennial Harbinger called this attitude an evasion.[39] The Review called it subversive evasion and pointed out the inconsistency of embracing the doctrine of personal responsibility in communion and then refusing to allow personal responsibility in the questions of baptism and church membership.[40]

J. H. Garrison considered that the gospel fully and faithfully preached was the only guard to communion or baptism.[41] In 1875 Garrison was against union meetings with the Pedo-baptist churches for communion:

> We have never engaged in such meetings, and cannot, until our views are materially changed. . . . This would be arranging to commune with those whom we know have not put on Christ.[42]

Thirty years later he had changed his mind about the possible Christianity of the unimmersed.

The Apostolic Times summed up the Disciples position in 1875 in the following manner:

> The view taken by the Disciples is, that the Supper is for the immersed alone . . . [they] leave for everyone to judge for

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[39] Quoted in "The Communion Question," Christian, XIII (June 3, 1875), 36.

[40] Ibid.

[41] "The Communion Question," Christian, XIII (June 3, 1875), 4. In this article, Garrison quotes from the British paper and the American Christian Review, and then appends to their remarks his own opinion. He claimed Disciples assert no prerogative, and have no open or closed communion.

[42] Ibid.

> himself as to whether he will or will not partake. They presume not to judge. To his own Master each one stands or falls. So if one of their number should commune with others, he is never called to account. Having borne their testimony on baptism, they feel they have done their duty.[43]

Errett agreed that this position was one in which there was fairly uniform agreement among the Disciples, and considered this position "open communion."[44] He urged that the Disciples adopt a higher understanding of communion:

> We regret that our own brethren humor this notion [the Lord's Supper as the communion] --this offspring of priestly assumption and papal superstition--in consenting to entertain the proposition that baptism is a prerequisite to the Lord's Supper, just as if it were not equally prerequisite to every thing in Christian life and Christian association.[45]

He considered that the Christian idea of fellowship of communion was "much wider and higher and deeper than that of communion in the Lord's Supper."[46]

The discussion was about over by 1880. The practice of the majority of Disciples churches had not changed. About the only thing the discussion revealed was the intense devotion of the Disciples to the importance of baptism by immersion--a devotion that was unquestioned in the nineteenth century. The discussion also revealed that there was an exclusive character to thinking on the nature of the church in the 1860's and 1870's that made it virtually impossible to recognize the validity of the other denominations--a thought pattern which explains why so little was done by the Disciples in the way of Christian unity.

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[43] "The Lord's Supper--IV," Apostolic Times, VII (June, 1875), 246.

[44] "The Lord's Supper," Christian Standard, XI (Aug., 1876), 252.

[45] "Communion," Christian Standard, XI (Aug., 1876), 260.

[46] Ibid.

The Federation Question

While the question of open or close communion revealed the Disciples attitude toward their religious neighbors in the 1860's, the issue of this relationship continued to recur. The Disciples existed as a part of a larger religious community whether they chose to recognize it or not. Some of them did recognize this, and when the idea of church federation began to gain prominence around the turn of the century, the question as to whether the Disciples were to participate caused a re-examination of their relationship with other bodies. The leadership on both sides of this re-examination was provided by the editors of the two most powerful periodicals among the Disciples. J. H. Garrison, editor of the *Christian-Evangelist*, was unquestionably the leader among the proponents of Disciple participation in church federation, and the whole weight of the Christian-Evangelist was thrown to its support. J. A. Lord, editor of the Christian Standard, was the leader of the forces opposed to Disciples participation, and the Standard's influence, using many of the same arguments the Advocate and the Review as well as the Standard had used in the 1860's and 1870's, was solidly against the Disciples' entry into the program. The issue, as in the communion controversy, was basically the propriety of any kind of recognition or co-operation with other denominations.

Garrison did not, like many of his contemporaries, "interpret the gospel as an extended footnote on the necessity of immersion."[47] Therefore, he found it somewhat easier than some of his editorial companions to admit that a degree of validity was to be found in other churches and to assume a co-operative attitude toward them. The Standard, even before the death of the liberal Isaac Errett, found this somewhat difficult. With the success of the great revivalists, who generally worked on an inter-denominational basis, union meetings became the popular order of the day. Disciples were wondering if they should co-operate with the Moody-Sankey revivals. Errett responded with "Hands off," since the subject of baptism was taboo at these meetings and Errett believed that they could be no good without this important doctrine.[48] Garrison, on the other hand, was heartily in favor of union evangelistic efforts. He wrote:

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[47] W. E. Tucker, J. H. Garrison and Disciples of Christ (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1964), p. 68.

> Let there be co-operative effort in the cities, especially, to reach the ungospeled masses. . . . If we have some advantage in our evangelistic methods, let us illustrate them in fraternal co-operation with our religious neighbors, so far as we are permitted to do so.[49]

In response to the question, "How far is whatever tendency toward denominationalism which the Disciples of Christ may have due to our willingness to compromise with a divided Christendom?" Garrison replied:

> If "compromising with a divided Christendom" means recognizing the Christian character of those who are not of our fold, we should say that this is a tendency which is opposed to denominationalism.[50]

He admitted that the Disciples had some who felt there was little hope of salvation for those outside their own churches except on the basis of "uncovenanted mercies," but he denied this had ever been a representative attitude:

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[48] "Hands Off," Christian Standard, XII (June, 1877), 188.

[49] "A Forward Evangelistic Movement," Christian-Evangelist, XXXVIII (Jan., 1901), 37.

[50] "Questions and Answers," Christian-Evangelist, XXXVIII (Mar., 1901), 327.

> As we see it the danger-point was passed when there came to be among our men of "light and leading" the spiritual breadth and insight to recognize as Christian churches, with greater or less degree of error in teaching and practice, the great evangelical bodies around us.[51]

Garrison was ready to accept, as early as 1901, the kind of challenge that was presented to the Disciples at their Omaha Convention in October 1902. It was a challenge which evoked responses that split the two leading Disciple periodicals into two warring camps.

Editor J. A. Lord of the Christian Standard (Isaac Errett died in 1878 and was succeeded as editor of the Standard by his nephew, Russell Errett; Russell Errett, in turn, was succeeded by J. A. Lord) looked forward to the Omaha Convention of 1902 as a "signal event in our history."[52] It proved to be exactly that but in a way Lord scarcely could have anticipated. E. L. Powell of Louisville addressed the Convention on the subject: "Christian Union, the Paramount Issue."[53] This was followed by the introduction of Dr. E. B. Sanford of New York, secretary of the National Federation of Churches. Dr. Sanford spoke on the nature of the organization he served, which he described as essentially a missionary movement encouraging co-operative relations between churches.[54] Following Dr. Sanford's address, J. H. Garrison presented the following motion:

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[51] "Our Plea for Union and the Present Crisis," Christian-Evangelist, XXXVIII (Nov., 1901), 1445.

[52] "The Coming Convention," Christian Standard, XXXVIII (Sept., 1902), 1296.

[53] J. H. Garrison, "The Omaha Convention," Christian-Evangelist, XXXIX (Oct., 1902), 752.

> Resolved, That we, representatives of the Disciples of Christ, in convention assembled, having heard with pleasure the presentation of the claims of the Federation of Churches in the United States, as urged by the National Secretary, Dr. E. B. Sanford, do hereby express our cordial approval of the effort to bring the Churches of this country into closer co-operation and to give truer expression to the degree of unity which already exists, as the best means of promoting that complete unity for which our Lord prayed, and we pledge our hearty co-operation with this and every other movement that has for its object the unification of believers, to the end that the world may be converted and the kingdom of righteousness established in the earth.[55]

The chairman of the evening, I. N. McCash, assuming there would be no discussion, put the question at once and it was carried with a practical, if not absolute, unanimity.[56] The difference between practical and absolute proved a large one. It was J. A. Lord, editor of the Christian Standard.

After Garrison had presented his motion, Lord inquired as to whether this would commit the Disciples to a recognition of the denominations[57] (Lord's opposition to denominationalism prevented his recognition of the Disciples as a part of the system). He stated that he would oppose it if that would be the result. A motion to reconsider the action of the Convention was then passed. Garrison was called on to explain his motion. Garrison explained that the motion did not recognize the federation as a finality "but as a means of expressing present unity and promoting the complete unity for which our Lord prayed, and as such is in perfect harmony with our plea for union."[58] Lord was unconvinced. He re-iterated his warning against any action which would be tantamount to a recognition of the other denominations.[59] It was stated in reply that the resolution did not recognize the denominations as an ideal, scriptural, or permanent condition, but it did recognize them as facts, and that there were Christian people in them.[60] When the matter was put to a vote the second time it carried again, but this time there was a large minority vote. The Convention had split on the issue.

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[54] Ibid.

[55] Garrison, Christian-Evangelist, XXXIX, 753.

[56] Ibid.

In the next several months the pages of the Standard and the Christian-Evangelist were filled with a review of the controversial action and its possible ramifications. Lord wrote an extremely favorable report of the Convention, noting that there were over 8,000 present.[61] He also noted that the Boston Record of September 22 had erroneously assumed that the Omaha Convention would deal with a union between the Disciples and the Congregationalists, and commented, "Christian union cannot be brought about by Convention votes."[62] Lord took advantage of this opportunity to assert his support of the New Testament as opposed to denominationalism and human authority. Concerning the federation resolution, Lord cried "Foul play!"[63] The vote at the Convention had been a voice vote, and those who were against it had called for a division, which was denied. Lord believed that this was contrary to parliamentary law and that the resolution actually had been defeated instead of adopted. At any rate, he did not let his readers forget that he had opposed the resolution and the whole idea of federation, which he considered a compromise with an order of things contrary to the teaching of the gospel.[64] Lord believed a large majority of the Disciples believed as he did, since "we have too much confidence in the good sense and loyalty to the truth of the brethren" to think otherwise.[65]

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[57] Ibid.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid.

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[61] "The Omaha Convention," Christian Standard, XXXVIII (Oct., 1902), 1486.

[62] "An Impossible Unity," Christian Standard, XXXVIII (Oct., 1902), 1360.

[63] See the Christian Standard, XXXVIII (Nov., 1902), 1543.

Meanwhile, the Christian-Evangelist was going all out in support of the principle of federation. J. M. Philputt, in a lengthy article entitled, "The Federation of Churches," argued that while Christian unity had to do with principles, federation concerned practice and rested on two facts: the essential unity of all evangelical churches and the New Testament concept of the church.[66] Noting that the movement had started in this country in New York City in 1890 and in England the same year with an article in the Methodist Times by Dr. Guinness Rogers entitled, "A Congress of Free Churches," Philputt pointed out three results of the movement: (1) the prevention of overlooking some area of work and overlapping in others; (2) the expression of Christian sentiment as a unit on economic, social, and political reforms; and (3) a deeper doctrinal unity.[67] Garrison denied that congregations which agreed to co-operate could only do so by surrendering their distinctive faith or that they would be endorsing the idea that one church is as good as another.[68] He assured his readers that the Disciples would not lose the influence of their plea for simple, "undenominational" Christianity: "Brethren, if we look after our work we can afford to let the Lord look after our influence."[69]

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[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Christian-Evangelist, XXXIX (Nov., 1902), 776.

[67] Ibid.

W. F. Richardson suggested that the Convention was not the time or place to vote on the federation of the churches, since it was a matter not germane to a missionary convention.[70] Garrison defended himself and the Convention against this charge. He noted that the Convention had frequently dealt with the subject of Christian union before, and "the Federation of Churches is a phase of the general Christian Union movement that is abroad among the churches."[71] He compared church federation to the Y. M. C. A., the International Sunday School Association, and the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor, into each of which the Disciples had entered and profited. He felt concerning the whole range of co-operative endeavors: "It is the Spirit of God moving in the hearts of God's people, and calling them to a more united effort to advance God's kingdom."[72]

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[68] "Co-operation--Not Compromise," Christian-Evangelist, XXXIX (Nov., 1902), 788.

[69] Ibid.

[70] W. F. Richardson, "Our General Convention and Some Needed Changes," Christian-Evangelist, XXXIX (Nov., 1902), 775.

[71] "About Germaneness," Christian-Evangelist, XXXIX (Nov., 1902), 810.

Lord and the Standard were still worried about the circumstances surrounding the vote at the Convention. Lord wrote that he was for the mass meeting, "but it should be made impossible for any person to precipitate a vote or debate on new questions, or questions about which the brethren are likely to differ."[73] In a vein entirely free of any sign of rancor or ungenerosity toward Garrison, Lord blamed the whole matter on the failure of the Convention to provide for such emergencies by an established rule to refer all such matters to proper committees.[74] Lord, however, was not above using the same trick Franklin had used years before in his opposition to the organ--that of guilt by association. He wrote:

> We do not expect any encouragement or support from men who secretly hold and publicly advocate a progressive revelation, or who seek to promote the federation of churches

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[72] Ibid.

[73] "Safeguarding the Convention," Christian Standard, XXXVIII (Nov., 1902), 1506.

[74] Ibid.

of Christ with denominational bodies.[75]

In one brief editorial, he managed to link the proponents of federation with Biblical modernists, compromisers with the liquor traffic, apologists for Romanism, and "adopters of a rose water treatment of public evils and modern heresies."[76]

The Gospel Advocate saw the whole question of federation in a clear and simple light. David Lipscomb wrote:

> The federation of churches advocated proposes the merging of the different denominations into one great denomination. . . . This means a surrender and suppression of all the distinctive teachings of the Bible for the sake of denominational union. . . . This direction is the natural outgrowth of the organization of the first society to do the work of the church of God.[77]

A little later, Lipscomb added:

> In less than one hundred years, in less than three generations, these people have made a complete change of front, have completely abandoned the end for which they started, and have abandoned the great fundamental principle of their existence; and now as a denomination, in their denominational capacity, through their denominational head, they

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[75] "The Standard and Its Friends," Christian Standard, XXXVIII (Nov., 1902), 1506.

[76] Ibid.

[77] "Missionary Work," Gospel Advocate, XLIV (Nov., 1902), 728.

> form an alliance, with the denominations they set out to destroy.[78]

While the Advocate agreed with the Standard in opposing federation, it was small comfort for the Standard. By 1902 the influence of the Advocate was virtually limited to those Southern churches which had been alienated from the rest of the brotherhood since 1861. Actually the Advocate paid little attention to the controversy between the Standard and the Christian-Evangelist. The gulf between them was too wide for the readers of one to be interested in the same things as the readers of the others.

Garrison carried on his fight for the federation principle:

> No one who understands and is loyal to our reformatory movement favors any form of federation that involves the sacrifice of any of its essential principles. . . . Federation has the same foe to contend with that our plea for union has--denominational pride and jealousy. . . . Anti-federation is at bottom a denial of the essential Christian character, spirit, and aim of these Protestant churches, and a refusal to recognize in them children of a common father and disciples of a common Lord.[79]

The debate between Garrison and Lord hinged around their respective understandings of the meaning of federation and the outcome of Disciples participation in an actual, concrete Federation of Churches. Garrison saw it as a simple co-operation, without any surrender of group distinctives, while Lord saw federation as a merger in which the Disciples would surrender everything of value in their heritage. Garrison saw the outcome of Disciples participation as the evangelization of unreached areas of people and the prevention of duplication in church work. Lord saw it as a recognition of the denominations as valid churches of Christ, among which the Disciples would not even be first among equals. In the narrowest kind of sectarian vein, he wrote:

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[78] "The Federation of Denominations," Gospel Advocate, XLIV (Nov., 1902), 760.

[79] "A Few Points on Federation," Christian-Evangelist, XXXIX (Dec., 1902), 864.

> Federation is more than the harmless and laudable co-operation that a few brethren at Omaha stated it to be. The Secretary claimed each church has a part of the truth, and therefore all together would be the whole truth and the church of Christ is all denominations together. This is nothing but the old "branches" argument. We will never recognize the legitimacy of denominational bodies wearing human names, founded on human creeds, and observing anti-scriptural ordinances.[80]

As to Garrison's contention that the Federation of Churches was simply an expression of the already existing essential unity of the churches, Lord replied:

> To say that denominational churches and churches simply Christian have "essential

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[80] "Federation Once More," Christian Standard, XXXVIII (Dec., 1902), 1692.

> unity" is to say that the plea of the Campbells and the Stones [sic] was much ado about nothing.[81]

Lord considered federation simply a substitute for the divine plan for Christian unity and asserted that if it had been understood at Omaha, the resolution would not have received a dozen votes.[82] He added that the brethren would never consent to it until they were ready to surrender their plea, which was their only reason for existence.[83]

The first issue of the Standard in 1903 contained an article by M. M. Davis, in which he asserted that the theory of Christian union could not be made practical by changing the Disciple position on the denomination question, or doctrinal questions, or according to the "church federation plan."[84] Joseph Franklin, the son of Benjamin Franklin, pointed out in the Standard that the "Current Reformation" could not enter into a federation of churches anyway, because it was not a church in the accepted denominational pattern.[85]

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[81] Ibid.

[82] Ibid., p. 1693.

[83] Ibid.

[84] "How to Make Practical the Theory of Christian Union," Christian Standard, XXXIX (Jan., 1903), 3.

[85] "Federation of Churches vs. Co-operation of Christians," Christian Standard, XXXIX (Jan., 1903), 71.

Garrison did not try to defend the Federation of Churches as the best possible plan, or as being without flaws, or as an inflexible approach; but rather he emphasized the flexibility and freedom of the arrangement and tried to get the brethren to understand the tentative nature of the organization. He considered the best possible method of promoting unity as "the giving of expression to the unity which already exists," and to him the Federation of Churches was an example of this which was bound to be more powerful than any precept or preaching.[86] Garrison denied that the Federation of Churches was comparatively the best plan, better than the Disciples plea, or the Y. M. C. A., or the Christian Endeavor, but it was an open-ended plan with wonderful possibilities. He pointed out that "federation is the name given to an effort at more systematic and closer co-operation among different evangelical churches for the accomplishment of certain common ends."[87] The particular methods to be used were still in a fluid state, according to Garrison, and while the definite plans and constitution were still open, the Christian-Evangelist definitely approved of the spirit [italics his] of the movement.[88] Lord replied that the whole thing was just a huge blunder, and everyone was ready to admit it except Garrison.[89]

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[86] "The Omaha Resolution," Christian-Evangelist, XL (Jan., 1903), 24.

[87] "The Christian-Evangelist and Church Federation," Christian-Evangelist, XL (Jan., 1903), 44.

Garrison had delivered a plea for federation as early as 1894 before the National Convention of the Disciples meeting in Richmond, Virginia. His speech, "World-wide Missions," was subsequently published as a tract, Union and Victory.[90] The evangelical thrust was one of his principal arguments for federation. As to the organization itself, Garrison pointed out six characteristics in its defense:

1. It was not a federation of denominations, but of local churches and Christian workers.
2. Co-operation was on a basis of equality, not at a sacrifice of conscience or truth.
3. Nobody was expected to unite with a church he could not endorse.
4. There was to be no abandonment of churches except on a voluntary basis.
5. Federation was simply a voluntary agreement to co-operate on some mutually-arranged plan.
6. It was independent of denominational complications.[91]

Items three and four of Garrison's defense were points that Lord had specifically attacked. Lord feared that the Federation of Churches would recommend that Disciple churches close in some areas that were over-churched, and he disagreed with the comity arrangement through which certain areas that needed churches were assigned to a particular denomination as their territory.[92] At the Des Moines Congress of Disciples in the Spring of 1903, Lord was pleased that the discussion on federation emphasized that no hindrance would be made in the Disciples efforts to plant new churches.[93] In fact, he felt that in the whole discussion at Des Moines love triumphed over logic.[94] Garrison pointed out that Lord had refused to make a speech against federation at Des Moines, even when his friends requested him to, and Garrison felt it must have been due to some motive other than love, especially since the Standard was so violent in its opposition to any and all federation except the "all come to me" variety.[95]

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[88] Ibid.

[89] "Federation Again," Christian Standard, XXXIX (Jan., 1903), 113.

[90] "A Plea for Federation at the Richmond Convention in 1894," Christian-Evangelist, XL (Jan., 1903), 65.

[91] "Notes and Comments," Christian-Evangelist, XL (Feb., 1903), 105.

Garrison wrote:

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[92] See the Christian Standard, XXXIX (May, 1903), 692.

[93] "The Des Moines Conference," Christian Standard, XXXIX (April, 1903), 474.

[94] Ibid.

[95] "Opposed to Federation," Christian-Evangelist, XL (May, 1903), 385.

> The case as respects church federation is, at present, standing about this way: The kind of federation which we have advocated, which insists on free scope for the development of the life that is in us, and for the proclamation of the truth we hold in trust, is universally approved. At least no one, so far, has objected to that kind of federation.[96]

Whatever kind of federation it may have been that Garrison had in mind, Lord was opposed. Garrison accused him of turning theological summersaults and being capable of sudden conversion from one extreme to another.[97] He wrote: "Who can predict with certainty where the next acrobatic leap will land him?"[98] In support of this, he cited Lord's exception in 1888 to an address of Isaac Errett's, when Lord argued for the admission of the "pious unimmersed" to the church.[99] Now, claimed Garrison, Lord was crying that the Disciples would be ruined if they had any fellowship with these same people. True to Disciples editorial practice, the controversy became involved in personalities, charges, and counter-charges.

Still Lord hammered away. He felt that the Standard had shown the Omaha resolution to be a blunder and that it involved a recognition of denominations as a legitimate condition of church life.[100] He painted a vivid picture of the Federation of Churches building up a particular sect in a given field, the sect to be determined by a council, and persecuting any other church which might enter that field.[101] Lord put before his readers the specter of a sociological canvass determining which sect was to be promoted, of churches thinned out mercilessly, of one faith supplanting another, and all this ruled by a committee on the basis of expediency with doctrinal differences being regarded as superficial.[102] As Lord painted the picture for the Standard readers, it was indeed a lurid and authoritarian organization.

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[96] "Notes and Comments," Christian-Evangelist, XL (April, 1903), 305.

[97] "A Glimpse Into History," Christian-Evangelist, XL (May, 1903), 405.

[98] Ibid.

[99] Ibid.

> Garrison called upon Lord not to federate if he did not believe there was any "essential unity," or that there are any churches sufficiently Christian in their faith, character, aim and spirit for him to work with on terms of Christian fraternity, for the futherance of common ends. . . .[103]

Garrison aired his feeling that it was fortunate that few held such narrow, restricted ideas of fellowship in

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[100] "Another Word on Federation," Christian Standard, XXXIX (May, 1903), 692.

[101] Ibid.

[102] Ibid.

[103] "Is There No 'Essential Unity'?" Christian-

Christian service.[104] In defense Lord pointed out:

> Federation is always consummated between institutions which are willing to give up something of their individual liberty to secure certain ends which all desire in common.[105]

He asserted that he was not against co-operation which did not involve surrender and was not inconsistent, as Garrison had charged, in his conception of the plea and practice of Church union.[106] He correctly pointed out that federation involved fraternal intercourse and co-operation and admitted: "Now, respectfully, but plainly, we have to insist that denominational churches have no rights under the gospel of Christ."[107] This was precisely the stand taken by many Disciples editors in the communion controversy. The standing of the other denominations was the nub of the issue. Since federation assumed co-operation between equals and he was unwilling to admit that any other church was an equal of the Disciples, Lord was forced by consistency to oppose any form of federation.

Evangelist, XL (May, 1903), 424.

[104] Ibid.

[105] "Federation," Christian Standard, XXXIX (Sept., 1903), 1272.

[106] "Federation Again," Christian Standard, XXXIX (July, 1903), 1072.

[107] Ibid., p. 1073.

Both the Standard and the Christian-Evangelist were ready to declare the federation controversy a closed issue by the end of 1903. It had occupied hundreds of columns in the news, article, and editorial sections of both papers and for a year had been the principal issue. Garrison wrote in September that he was done with the controversy:

> The time has come when we can afford to pass by in silence the attacks or criticisms of any religious journal that has shown itself incapable of frank, candid, fraternal, and dignified discussion of principles, and has developed a chronic spirit of fault-finding or of hypercriticism.[108]

Lord declared the controversy closed in the pages of the Standard in December. Sanford, the national secretary of the Federation of Churches, had refused to answer with a categorical "yes" or "no" Lord's question as to whether the Disciples, in the Federation, could establish new work anywhere or refuse to give up an established position.[109] After this, Lord said simply he could not enter Sanford's federation.[110]

In spite of their resolve to ignore the controversy over federation after 1903, both the Standard and the

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[108] "Notes and Comments," Christian-Evangelist, XL (Sept., 1903), 391.

[109] "A Closed Incident," Christian Standard, XXXIX (Dec., 1903), 1843.

[110] Ibid.

Christian-Evangelist were involved in it again in 1906. That there could have been a two-year moratorium showed remarkable restraint on the part of a class of men among the Disciples not exactly noted for restraint, but they had been pleasantly occupied with other controversies.[111]

In January 1906 Garrison wrote:

> Of course, the stock in trade, in the way of argument, with those favoring isolation as against federation and co-operation with other followers of Christ, is the danger of compromising our principles by mixing with others considered less sound in their faith and Scriptural in their practice. This principle would have kept Christ out of the world.[112]

Lord still considered the central issue the mutual recognition of each other's legitimacy in federation. He refused to consider the Disciples a denomination, but simply churches of Christ, or individual Christians.[113] Garrison called this a position the logical termination of which would be complete isolation, "the very quintessence of sectarian narrowness which we started out to overthrow."[114]

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[111] See Stephen J. Corey, Fifty Years of Attack and Controversy (St. Louis: Committee on Publication of the Corey Manuscript, 1953), pp. 14-35.

[112] "Editor's Easy Chair," Christian-Evangelist, XLIII (Jan., 1906), 71.

[113] "Churches Which Christ Did Not Know," Christian Standard, XLII (Jan., 1906), 129.

[114] "A Point of Order," Christian-Evangelist, XLIII (Mar., 1906), 262.

In March an entire issue of the Standard was devoted to articles and editorials opposing federation. It was a veritable crescendo.[115] No new arguments were advanced, however, in spite of the Standard's new charge that the Christian-Evangelist had "declared the denominations to be Scriptural and churches of Christ,"[116] a fact which changed the issue, according to Lord. Lord professed to be surprised that the Christian-Evangelist "has so readily accepted the logical consequence of its Federation plea."[117]

Lord pointed out the usual process of his rival in controversy consisted of the following eight steps:

1. A bold statement challenging the Standard.
2. Amendment of the issue under the stress of argument.
3. Misstatement of the opponent's position.
4. Failure to give the readers the other side.
5. An increasing irritation under pressure.
6. A call on friends for help.
7. A defense with agitation in all departments.
8. Quitting, in anger and despair for a lost cause.[118]

These charges added considerable heat but no light at all to the "dignified discussion" for the enlightenment of the

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[115] See Christian Standard, XLII (March 3, 1906).

[116] "A New Issue," Christian Standard, XLII (Mar., 1906), 333.

[117] Ibid.

[118] "Where History Repeats Itself," Christian Standard, XLII (Mar., 1906), 449.

Disciples. Garrison responded:

> The Standard's editor absolutely throws to the winds all pretense of fairness and justice and so grossly misrepresents The Christian-Evangelist, and all others who stand with it, that we cannot, with any sort of self-respect, pay any further attention to its utterances.[119]

Much of the discussion between the two periodicals was problematical, since the Disciples had no machinery for formally entering the Federation of Churches as a religious body, and the Federation itself was in an extremely primitive and fluid state. Probably the principal cause the discussion served was to drive another wedge between the only two powerful periodicals of the Disciples at the time, and thus add a bit of insurance that the two competitors could never be combined into one official organ of the Disciples.

An Inter-Church Conference was set to convene in New York City in December 1906 to recommend a specific plan of federation. The result was the "Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America."[120] Delegates from the

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[119] "The Christian-Evangelist and the Christian Standard," Christian-Evangelist, XLIII (Mar., 1906), 326.

[120] J. H. Garrison, "Plan of Federation," Christian-Evangelist, XLIII (April, 1906), 535.

Disciples, at the urging of Garrison, were present.[121] They were not officially appointed nor official representatives, but the Federal Council considered the Disciples one of their founding constituents. In reporting on the meeting, Lord noted that there were delegates present from thirty-two evangelical bodies, and he contrasted unfavorably the glory and pomp of this meeting with the humble Salvation Army bells ringing in the streets of New York for food for the hungry and needy.[122] He quoted from the address of the Methodist Bishop Hoss ("We are here with the distinct understanding that the denominations have a right to exist . . .") to prove the meeting was interdenominational and noted: "No one challenged his position."[123] Lord bid the whole group Godspeed and did not even mention that there were Disciples present.[124]

In spite of a long and uphill battle at least one segment of the Disciples had, under the leadership of the Christian-Evangelist, recognized the value of co-operation

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[121] "A New Step Toward Unity," Christian-Evangelist, XLV (Nov., 1908), 1444.

[122] "The Federation Convention," Christian Standard, XLIV (Dec., 1908), 2137.

[123] Ibid.

[124] Ibid.

with other denominations and, inferentially, their right to exist. That it was only one segment of the Disciples rather than the whole body was due in part to the *Christian Standard* and was the portent of another rent in the Disciples' internal unity. Both factions had the leadership of a powerful periodical around which to rally.

CHAPTER VI

BIG BUSINESS: FROM PERIODICAL TO PUBLISHING HOUSE

The Background of the Campbell Hymnal

Books were scarce in most homes on the western frontier and, after the Bible, the hymnal was most apt to be found among the few books pertaining to religion. The hymnal was regarded in the Disciples churches as a vitally important instrument for religious instruction.[1] In the absence of authoritative doctrinal works such as creeds and catechisms, the hymnal was the only frequently-used standard work outside of the Bible, and the early leaders of the church were concerned lest the words of the hymns used in the churches reflect sectarian errors of doctrine and sentiment.[2]

Alexander Campbell selected and published a volume of hymns he considered suitable in 1828, the title of which was _Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs_.[3] This little hymnal, which contained only the words without musical notation except for the designation of the meter, was published in probably more than fifty editions and certainly no less than forty-five.[4] It proved to be an extremely popular work, and by 1848 it had sold more than 100,000 copies.[5] Alexander Campbell had complete or partial control of the book from 1828 to 1864.[6] From 1828 to 1834 the hymnal was published in four editions. In 1834 Walter Scott, Barton W. Stone, and John T. Johnson were listed as compilers in addition to Campbell, and five editions were published between that time and 1843. Between 1843 and 1851 twenty-five stereotyped and one hand-set editions were published, and there were seven more from 1851 to 1864 when Campbell relinquished the copyright of the hymnal.[7]

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[1] Alexander Campbell, _Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs_, 2nd ed. (Bethany, Va.: Printed and Published by A. Campbell, 1853), p. 13.

[2] Alexander Campbell, "Psalmody--No. 1," _Millennial Harbinger_, Series IV, I (Oct., 1851), 576.

[3] Claude E. Spencer, "The Campbell Hymn Book," _Discipliana_, VIII (Jan., 1949), 47.

Since the publishing of the 1851 revision Alexander Campbell had used the profits from the sale of the book for the education of ministers at Bethany College.[8] Isaac Errett headed a committee which approached Campbell on the subject of transferring his copyright to the American Christian Missionary Society so that the profits from it might be used to further the cause of missions.[9] Campbell was willing that the profits from the book should be applied in this manner, but he was extremely dubious of the idea of the Missionary Society's entering into the publishing field in any way. A compromise was effected by which the copyright was transferred to a committee, jointly selected by Campbell and the Society, and held by the committee in trust for the Society.[10] The committee was to revise and enlarge the hymnal, and the whole procedure would "prepare the way for a book which should be emphatically the book of the brotherhood . . . ."[11] W. K. Pendleton announced to the public: "Our beloved Father Campbell has placed this important matter in the hands of the Am. Ch. Missionary Society. It is very desirable that we have but one Hymn Book . . . ."[12]

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[4] Ibid.

[5] See the Millennial Harbinger, Series III, V (Dec., 1848), 710.

[6] Spencer, "The Campbell Hymn Book," 47.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Claude E. Spencer, "The Campbell Hymn Book," Discipliana, IX (July, 1949), 16.

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[9] Campbell had been willing to do this as early as 1852. He wrote: "I will cheerfully resign all connection with the hymn-book, whenever a general convention of our brethren . . . shall be held. At that time, the convention may have it." "Surreptitious Publication of Our Hymn Book," Millennial Harbinger, Series IV, II (Aug., 1852), 474.

[10] Isaac Errett, "The Christian Hymn Book," Millennial Harbinger, Series V, VII (Nov., 1864), 520.

[11] Ibid.

[12] "Revision of the Christian Hymn Book," Millennial Harbinger, Series V, VII (Nov., 1864), 524.

The trustees reported that the copyright had been transferred on November 30, 1864, and the committee was to have it published and sold "at a reasonable and moderate price, so that extortionate profits shall not be made therefrom."[13]

The new revised hymnal was published by H. S. Bosworth of Cincinnati under the title The Christian Hymn Book: A Compilation of Songs, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs and was ready for sale on September 20, 1865.[14] The publication committee consisted of the trustees jointly agreed upon by Campbell and the Society: R. M. Bishop, chairman, C. H. Gould, W. H. Lape, O. A. Burgess, and J. B. Bowman.[15] The revising, or editing, committee consisted of Isaac Errett, W. K. Pendleton, W. T. Moore, T. M. Allen, and A. S. Hayden. The book was published on plates made from new type and contained 843 pages with 1,323 hymns.[16]

The new hymnal met with immediate acceptance among the churches and was published in three editions between 1865 and 1871. In 1871 it was revised again, and the title was changed to The Christian Hymnal.[17] The reception was not unmixed, however. David Lipscomb objected to it on the ground that "there is too much of a literary style to suit the wants and comprehensions of the masses."[18] Lipscomb went on to add, in a tone that for him was unusually conciliatory, that he was not opposing the hymnal, just urging watchfulness in those things desirable for universal adoption.[19]

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[13] Report of the Proceedings, 1865, p. 15.

[14] "Christian Hymn Book--New Edition," Millennial Harbinger, XXXVI (Sept., 1865), 432.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Spencer, "The Campbell Hymn Book," Discipliana,

A month later Lipscomb had changed his mind, and both he and Tolbert Fanning brought the full power of the Gospel Advocate to bear against the hymnal. Their objection was not really against the hymnal as such but against the Society with which it was financially connected. After some criticism of the quality of the binding and the paper used in the hymnal, Lipscomb stated that his real objection was that every time one of the books was purchased, the buyer was contributing to the support of the Society. Even admitting "that such societies may be conducted without detriment to the true spiritual interests of the Church of Jesus Christ . . ." this particular one, according to Lipscomb, had encouraged the work of Christians North robbing

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VIII (Jan., 1949), 47.

[18] "New Publications," Gospel Advocate, VIII (Jan., 1866), 11.

[19] Ibid.

and slaughtering Christians South.[20] He wrote: "It passed through the bloody-hearted Christian Missionary Society and this dimmed its pages to our eyes."[21] The real criminal to David Lipscomb was the Society, and the main crime of the Society was a political one. The connection between the hymnal and the Society tainted the hymnal:

> In my judgment the church had better do without a hymn book for the next fifty years, than fasten upon herself the fatal and corrupting influence of a political organization.[22]

Fanning agreed on the value of a single uniform hymnal but, like his co-editor, was unalterably opposed to anything which had any connection with the Society. He urged the brethren in Canada and in the South to agree on one hymnal and publish it together.[23]

In the face of this attack by the most influential periodical in the South, R. M. Bishop, chairman of the trustees for the hymnal, wrote to Fanning and Lipscomb giving them the details of the transfer of the hymnal from

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[20] "The New Hymn Book," Gospel Advocate, VIII (Feb., 1866), 133.

[21] Ibid.

[22] David Lipscomb, "The Cincinnati Society and Hymn Book," Gospel Advocate, VIII (Mar., 1866), 265.

[23] Tolbert Fanning, "Hymn Books," Gospel Advocate, VIII (May, 1866), 383.

Alexander Campbell. Bishop pointed out that the committee had requested that Campbell transfer the ownership to the American Christian Missionary Society but that Campbell had thought it best to keep the ownership distinct from the Society and had transferred it to the trustees instead, the only relationship being that the profits should go to the Society. In response, Lipscomb agreed that it was a satisfactory book, but added that all the trustees were rich city preachers and teachers and that they, in spite of Alexander Campbell's wish, were all leading men in the Society. He concluded: "But the objection of all objections to us to this book is its connexion /sic7 with the Society."[24] Three years later he had expanded his objections:

> We have felt as sure, as we ever did of anything dependent upon others, that on trial the society book would be condemned as unfit for use by Christian congregations. Unfit both on account of the size of the book, its associations with the society and the unworthiness of the contents of the book.[25]

Meanwhile, both Pendleton in the Millennial Harbinger and Errett in the Christian Standard were enthusiastic in their support and predictions of success for the hymnal.

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[24] "The New Hymn Book," Gospel Advocate, VIII (Aug., 1866), 552.

[25] "Hymn Books," Gospel Advocate, XI (Mar., 1869), 241.

Pendleton was ecstatic over a copy of the small edition he had just received from Bosworth in November 1867. He noted it was in nonpareil type, four and a quarter inches long, two and three-quarters inches wide, one inch thick, and sold for sixty cents a copy. He wrote: "This is the best Hymn Book, for the number of hymns in it, that has ever been published in the English language."[26] He added that 60,000 copies had already been sold.[27]

While the Millennial Harbinger and the Christian Standard were urging the sale of the Society hymnal, the Gospel Advocate was offering its readers a choice of eight different hymnals in its advertising columns.[28] Hymn book publishing proved to be a money-making business among the Disciples. In spite of the competition of others, Isaac Errett reported to the General Missionary Convention in 1874 that the trustees had contributed $1,305 to the Missionary treasury.[29] The figure had risen to more than $9,000 by 1884.[30] These profits caused the innocentappearing hymnal to become the center of a stormy and bitter controversy with the publication of a new edition in 1882.[31]

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[26] "The Christian Hymn Book," Millennial Harbinger, XXXVIII (Nov., 1867), 626.

[27] Ibid.

[28] See the Gospel Advocate, XX (May, 1878), 291.

[29] "Report," Christian Standard, IX (Oct., 1874), 348.

[30] F. M. Green, Christian Missions and Historical

The Expansion of the Publishing Houses

The controversy over the hymnal, which generated so much heat and so little light in the years 1882 and 1883, was relatively unimportant in itself. After all, the hymnal a congregation chooses to patronize is hardly of earth-shaking importance. This particular controversy had far-reaching consequences for the Disciples of Christ, however. In the first place, it is an indication of the change in the nature of the periodical press of the brotherhood, and, in the second place, it marked the first rift in the cordial relationship between the Society and the Christian Standard. The Standard had originated at least partially as a spokesman for the Society. Isaac Errett, its editor, had been elected president of the American Christian Missionary Society after the death of Alexander Campbell and though he declined the office, he had been from the first one of the staunchest supporters of the Society.[32] The

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Sketches of Missionary Societies Among the Disciples of Christ (St. Louis: John Burns Publishing Co., 1884), p. 166, quoted in Spencer, Discipliana, IX (July, 1949), 16.

[31] Spencer, "The Campbell Hymn Book," Discipliana, IX (Oct., 1949), 32.

[32] Report of the Proceedings, 1866, p. /torn/.

Standard held the Society banner high and made itself spokesman for the cause of co-operation. Errett died not long after the controversy over the hymnal, and the Standard began developing a critical attitude toward the Society that grew harsher with each passing decade.

The nature of the brotherhood periodical press was changing in the 1880's. The early periodicals began as one-man operations. Though the editor professed to speak in the interest of the entire brotherhood, he actually spoke with no other authority than his own. Alexander Campbell published, as well as wrote for and edited, the Christian Baptist and the Millennial Harbinger. Campbell was the Harbinger. The same thing was true of Barton W. Stone and the Christian Messenger and the host of lesser papers which appeared before the Civil War. They were, compared to the great publishing enterprises which began to develop after the War, "small, one-man affairs." The periodical was published in order to provide a platform for the editor and the dissemination of the news and views of the brotherhood. Their purpose was evangelistic and apologetic, not to make money. Few of them ever broke even in a financial sense, and the editors, who were also the publishers, were quite willing to continue them at a financial sacrifice. Advertising was limited to a few notices, generally gratis, of other periodicals, educational institutions, and church co-operation meetings. The editor, as publisher, did not extend the publishing operation beyond his periodical, and indeed few of them had the money to do so had they wished it. In short, before the Civil War, the typical Disciple editor was a publisher of necessity in order to get out his periodical, and he did not regard his activities in this line as a business the principal, or even secondary, aim of which was to make a profit.

After the War, periodical publishing spread out and generally became a big business. Steam presses and extensive use of stereotype plates, both of which had been used to some extent before the War, were widely used as the publishing industry grew. The invention of the linotype, coupled with the use of new and improved rotary presses and cheap paper made from wood fiber, changed printing from an art to a craft and then to an industry in the decades of the 1880's and the 1890's. Circulation of the periodicals grew tremendously, and had to in order to meet rising costs of publication. The American Christian Review had been the largest periodical in terms of circulation in 1860 with a weekly issue of 8,500. By 1885 the Standard had the largest circulation of Disciples periodicals, with a weekly issue of 60,000.[33] Advertising, which had long been the support of secular newspapers, now received increased attention from Disciples periodical editors. Country newspapers were filled with patent medicine advertisements.[34] These now found their way into the Disciples periodicals, providing some variety of entertainment and much-needed revenue.[35]

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[33] "The Canvass for the Standard," Christian Standard, XX (Jan., 1885), 5.

An examination of the leading Disciples periodicals of the 1880's and a comparison of them with those of the 1860's reveals some rather definite changes. The Millennial Harbinger and the Gospel Advocate were book-size two-column publications with limited advertising. The same thing was true of the Gospel Echo. The Christian Standard, which began publication after the War, came out as a full-size, six-column newspaper of eight pages. The Gospel Advocate of 1870 was still two-column book-size, containing thirty-two pages. It carried seven pages of advertising, an increase over earlier years. By 1883 the Advocate had expanded to magazine-size with three columns per page and had two four-column pages of advertising, including a house advertisement of books and tracts for the firm of Lipscomb and Sewell, publishers of the Advocate. By 1882 Lipscomb was remarking to his readers that he had often been asked to publish a Sunday School paper containing the International Sunday School lessons. He already had a weekly paper and Sunday School lesson guide for sale and was serving as agent for C. C. Cline and Company of Louisville.[36] Thus the publishers of the Advocate were beginning to diversify into the production of church-related materials in addition to their periodical.

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[34] See Clark, Chapter IV, pp. 66-78.

[35] One average issue of the American Christian Review (XXII, March 11, 1879) contained advertisements for sixteen patent medicines: Carboline, for growing hair; Liquid Pearl, for beautifying the complexion; Gray's Specific, for nervous debility; Swaim's Panacea, for scrofula; Dolryn's Sure Cure, for catarrh; Dr. James' Cannalis Indica, for consumption, bronchitis, asthma; Hop's Bitters, for all stomach, bowel, blood, and liver diseases; Roger's Citrate of Magnesia, for epilepsy or fits; and the champion of them all--Pond's Extract, which would cure rheumatism, hemorrhages, sores, ulcers, wounds, bruises, toothache, and sore nipples.

The same thing was happening at the Christian-Evangelist office. The Christian-Evangelist had many antecedents.[37] All of them were published by individuals rather than companies and by editors rather than professional publishers. J. H. Garrison, however, who had become co-editor with J. C. Reynolds of the Gospel Echo in 1869, had moved and consolidated and changed the name of the periodical until he emerged as editor of the Christian, which was published in St. Louis by the Christian Publishing Company. Garrison organized the company there in January 1874.[38] The Christian-Evangelist was no longer the small, one-man operation its progenitors had been in pre-consolidation days. It was a magazine-size paper and carried nine columns of advertising, including an advertisement for Sunday School literature (two monthlies, three weeklies, and a quarterly for infant, primary, intermediate, advanced, and adult classes) and hymnals for the Christian Publishing Company.[39]

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[36] "Sunday School Papers and Helps," Gospel Advocate, XXIV (Mar., 1882), 151.

[37] See Tucker, pp. 44-53.

The Christian Standard was first published in April 1866. The first publisher was a joint stock company, The Christian Publishing Association, with a capital stock issue of $100,000. Isaac Errett, the editor, began the paper with a subscription list of 2,000 names.[40] It was full newspaper size, and its eight pages carried a variety of information, including sections for poetry, original essays, correspondence, foreign religious news, literary works, Bible class, family and missionary news, editorials, book reviews, denominational news, financial and commercial news, educational and scientific interests. In spite of this variety and the capable way it was edited, the paper did not pay expenses the first year of operation, and in 1868 the company dissolved and turned it over to Errett.[41] Errett found he could not handle it alone, and the next year he accepted an offer from R. W. Carroll and Company of Cincinnati to publish the paper and retain him as editor.[42] This was a far cry from the situation a few decades earlier when a man of limited means could sustain a small, but influential, periodical. A new day of commercial interest and enterprise was dawning in the country, and the Disciples periodicals were a part of that new day.

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[38] James M. Flanagan, "Why We Celebrate our Centennial," Christian, 101 (Jan., 1963), 32.

[39] See the Christian-Evangelist, XX (1883).

[40] Lamar, p. 348.

The first issue of the Standard to carry a house advertisement[42] was May 5, 1866.[43] It included only the Christian Hymn Book and five books by Alexander Campbell. By June 1877 the Standard was offering its readers seven of Campbell's works, H. T. Anderson's New Translation, Mathes' publications, Fillmore's books, and Challen's publications.[44] The Standard prospered under the business management of R. W. Carroll. In the 1880's the outside advertising had expanded, and the activities of the publishing company were diversified. The Standard Publishing Company offered the public, in addition to the periodical, a Sunday School Series, Bible lessons, a lesson leaf, an illustrated Sunday School paper, books, tracts, and other Sunday school supplies, including complete Sunday School libraries and hymnals. In addition to these items, the Company also offered communion sets, maps, envelopes, reward and verse cards, baptismal suits, and Sunday School and church records. All that was lacking was illuminated crosses (that glow in the night) and lithographs of Jesus, and even these were supplied in later years in spite of the absence of New Testament authorization.

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[41] Ibid.

[42] A technical term, meaning an advertisement for the publisher.

[43] Christian Standard, I (May, 1866), 40.

[44] Ibid., p. 88.

The periodical publishing business was changed. The editor of the 1880's and after was apt to find himself a cog, albeit an important one, in a company designed to make a profit. Disciples could find even more danger in this situation than they had found in the personal power wielded by their editors when the editors were the unchallenged proprietors of their periodicals.[45] Disciples editors were, by and large, great and good men. If the

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[45] Garrison had to fight off a challenge for control from the business office (see Tucker, p. 221), but remained in personal control of the Christian-Evangelist.

Disciples had to have bishops in editorial garb, few could challenge the ability and dedication of such men as Barton Stone, Alexander Campbell, Walter Scott, Tolbert Fanning, David Lipscomb, Benjamin Franklin, Isaac Errett, or J. H. Garrison. But if the object of the publishing company was to make money, there was always the possibility that this object would come in conflict with the evangelical and doctrinal aim of the periodical, just as the personal influence of the editors had sometimes led them into conflict. This happened in the controversy over the hymnals in 1882 and 1883.

The Controversy

The trustees who held the copyright of the Christian Hymn Book in trust for the American Christian Missionary Society were R. M. Bishop, chairman, C. H. Gould, W. H. Lape, O. A. Burgess, and J. B. Bowman.[46] In his report to the Convention held at Louisville on October 21-24, 1880, Bishop reported some sentiment for a revision of the hymnal but stated that the demand had been confined to professional musicians. On behalf of the trustees he requested the sentiment of the Convention on this question.[47] Isaac Errett moved that the committee's report be referred to a committee of five. J. H. Garrison, L. H. Jamison, J. W. McGarvey, W. K. Pendleton, and Errett were appointed to this committee.[48] The committee of five later recommended to the Convention a thorough revision of the hymnal in order to preserve the unity of the brotherhood's hymnology and to keep abreast with the times.[49] The committee added that in this revision profit should be subordinate to the goal of producing an adequate book.[50] In the light of this decision to revise the hymnal, the Central Book Concern's royalty on the old version (1876) was reduced from $1,500 to $1,250 a year for the next year.[51] This would partially reimburse them for the plates which would soon be out of date.

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[46] "Introduction," Christian Hymnal: Revised, A Collection of Hymns and Tunes for Congregational and Social Worship (Cincinnati: H. S. Bosworth, Manufacturer and Publisher, 1882).

When the Christian Hymnal: Revised appeared in 1882, the Trustee's Preface stated that A. I. Hobbs, C. L. Loos, J. S. Lamar, A. R. Benton, and Joseph Franklin had served as hymnology editors and J. H. Fillmore, L. H.

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[47] Report of the Proceedings, 1880, p. 20.

[48] Ibid., p. 23.

[49] Ibid., p. 26.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid., p. 20.

Jamison, and T. P. Haley as music editors.[52]

In April 1881 J. H. Garrison took note of the project of revising the hymnal in the pages of the *Christian*. After urging the use of one hymnal in the churches, he noted that Campbell had surrendered the copyright to the General Christian Missionary Society (the successor to the Louisville Plan of 1869) to be held in trust by trustees in order to assure universal use of the same book, to build up a permanent mission fund, and to prevent the publication of hymnals simply as a matter of money-making.[53] Garrison noted prophetically:

> The time should come, and may it not be distant, when all our enterprises, such as newspapers (of all sorts), whether for the churches or Sunday Schools, colleges, hymn books, etc., will be the enterprises of the brotherhood, and not of individuals for the benefit of individuals.[54]

It was obvious before the revised version of the hymnal was ever undertaken that the publication of hymnals could be a lucrative business. Garrison further cautioned the churches against using cheap books by private publishers, their only virtue being their cheapness.[55]

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[52] "Trustee's Preface," *The Christian Hymnal: Revised. A Collection of Hymns and Tunes for Congregational and Social Worship* (Cincinnati: H. S. Bosworth, Manufacturer and Publisher, 1882), p. 3.

[53] "Our Hymnal," *Christian*, XVIII (Apr. 14, 1881), 4.

[54] *Ibid*.

In replying to this article, Isaac Errett urged that the following suggestions be heeded by the brotherhood: the use of only one hymnal, and the support of the revised hymnal because it was given to the General Christian Missionary Society that the brotherhood might have a universal hymnal, a permanent mission fund, and protection from the publication of hymnals as a matter of money-making.[56] Errett was echoing Garrison's sentiments exactly, and the two had the same understanding of the purpose of the hymnal. Errett was certainly in a position to know, since it was he who, in 1864, had negotiated the change in ownership of the hymnal. He proceeded to denounce bitterly the practice of using any hymnal just because it was cheap. He added:

> We hope these suggestions will receive the attention to which they are entitled, and that public sentiment will be sufficiently strong to discourage all attempts to introduce more than one book for use in our churches.[57]

This attack on the use of cheap books by private publishers brought a response from one of them, C. C. Cline, who resented the slur against his hymnal. He defended both his hymnal and himself and asserted that he was not opposed to the Society hymnal.[58] T. P. Haley answered Cline and rebuked him for trying to replace the Society hymnal, which was the practical result in a competitive market.[59]

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[55] Ibid.

[56] "The New Hymnal," Christian Standard, XVI (April, 1881), 140.

[57] Ibid.

The committee on revision, headed by A. I. Hobbs, was unusually careful to try to smooth the way for the new hymnal. The committee published a series of questions in the Christian for people to answer in order to help determine popular preference in hymns. All replies were directed to the secretary of the committee, J. H. Fillmore.[60] The result of this publicity was the creation of an atmosphere of expectancy and promise which even filtered into the pages of the Gospel Advocate, though it was through a loophole later plugged by the editors. J. W. Higbee, who conducted the "Church, Field, and Home Department" of the Advocate, commended the new hymnal soon to come off the presses and believed that the idea of one book was a good one. He wrote:

> Notoriety hunters are apt to try to flood the churches with cheap, hastily prepared

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[58] C. C. Cline, "'Our Hymnal' Criticised," Christian, XVIII (May 5, 1881), 3.

[59] T. P. Haley, "Reply to Bro. Cline," Christian, XVIII (May 5, 1881), 4.

[60] A. I. Hobbs, "The New Hymnal," Christian, XVIII (April 28, 1881), 8.

> books, but it will be best for us if we will seek to discourage all such and seek to influence all of our congregations to purchase our Hymnal.[61]

Regular Advocate readers must have been astounded to find these words of cordial support in their "old faithful." They had a right to be. Two months later, Higbee was plugging the new hymnal again and urging its purchase "inasmuch as you also contribute to the spread of the gospel and get it as cheap as if it were an individual enterprise."[62] The September issue of the Advocate contained notice of Higbee's resignation and David Lipscomb's comment that "we differed on the mission and co-operation questions."[63]

Two things plagued the brotherhood leaders before the new revised hymnal appeared for sale to the churches: its price, and the fear that private publishers might flood the market with a cheaper, inferior product in competition. Errett published a letter from W. H. Johnson, saying that it was representative of many he had received, in which Johnson voiced fear that the new hymnal would be priced too high and desiring a cheap edition containing words but no notes. Errett replied that the book could be made cheaper only by cutting out the profit of the Society, which was all right with him:

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[61] "The New Hymnal," Gospel Advocate, XXIV (Mar., 1882), 138.

[62] "The New Christian Hymnal," Gospel Advocate, XXIV (May, 1882), 298.

[63] "Bro. Higbee's Withdrawal," Gospel Advocate, XXIV (Sept., 1882), 575.

> Whatever will tend to unify our churches, so far as a hymn-book is concerned, we shall favor; for we regard it--not as a matter of life and death to our churches, by any means, but--as a matter of great importance that one book should be used in all our churches.[64]

The price set for the new hymnal was from seventy-five cents to one dollar each, depending on the binding. Errett protested to the trustees. He reiterated his devotion to the idea of one hymnal, but stated that he had been personally opposed to the demand for a revision, though he acceded to the wishes of the majority of the committee. Errett felt that, in order to stifle competition, the trustees ought to lower the price and let all the publishing houses sell the books at retail and in large lots.[65]

The trustees refused Errett's suggestion, and he (Errett) complained that the publisher was monopolizing the sale of the book.[66] Errett noted that Fillmore (the same man who had served on the editorial committee of the

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[64] "An Important Suggestion," Christian Standard, XVII (May, 1882), 140.

[65] "A Cheap Hymn-book," Christian Standard, XVII (June, 1882), 189.

[66] *Ibid.*

Christian Hymnal: Revised) was getting out a new hymnal which would probably be much the same as the Society's hymnal though it would be much cheaper.[67] Errett urged the trustees to heed the cry for a cheap hymnal and added: "We have nothing to do with the controversy between the publisher and the booksellers. We have no connection with, or any interest in, this or any other hymn-book."[68] This was a strange statement coming from the man who, more than anyone else, was responsible for the Society's having a hymnal. To give it the most charitable explanation, events were to prove Errett overly optimistic in his statement. The Christian Standard, as a bookseller, inaugurated the controversy with the publisher of the hymnal and, if any credence may be given to subsequent charges, the Standard proved to be the source of the much-feared competition for the Society's hymnal.

In June 1882 Errett had a six-column editorial on "The Hymn-book Question."[69] In this he included a letter from one of the trustees, C. H. Gould, in which Gould maintained that the Missionary Society, not the trustees, decided to issue the revised hymnal and the price was set in contract on the advice of experienced book-men. Gould added that the high costs incurred in the first edition would be lowered as the cost of making the stereotype plates was amortized. Errett also included correspondence from R. M. Bishop in which Bishop informed Errett that J. H. Fillmore had been the leader in suggesting the revision of the hymnal and that when the time had come for bidding on the publishing contract, Fillmore had bid eighteen and three-quarters cents royalty per copy (to be given to the Society for publication rights) and H. S. Bosworth, who received the contract, had bid twenty-one cents per copy. The trustees, according to Bishop, had subsequently offered to meet with Bosworth and Fillmore to settle merchandising differences, but Fillmore had refused. Bishop then asked Errett three questions: (1) is Fillmore right in acting as a reviser of the hymnal and then getting out a rival edition? (2) is he right in pressing for revision, then opposing it? (3) is he right in opposing it when he was underbid for the contract? In his reply to Gould and Bishop, Errett defended J. H. Fillmore and justified his procedure in bringing out a hymnal in competition to the Society's hymnal. Isaac Errett seemed to deny, in this editorial, everything he had previously asserted in relation to the hymnals.[70]

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[67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Christian Standard, XVII (June, 1882), 196.

This strange behavior on the part of the one man who had been most steadfast in his support of the idea of one official hymnal for the brotherhood and who had been the key figure in securing the copyright for the Society from Alexander Campbell appears to have only one explanation--business. Errett was irked because the Central Book Concern, a rival Cincinnati bookseller, was advertised as headquarters for the Society hymnal, and because Fillmore did not get the contract to publish the Society's hymnal.

As for the Standard, it proposed to sell the New Christian Hymn and Tune-Book, which was gotten out by Fillmore shortly after the Christian Hymnal: Revised appeared and which was substantially the same book. Errett wrote that the high price of the Society hymnal and its inferior quality were his reasons for opposing it. He said: "It does us good, sometimes, to be provoked to good works."[71]

Bosworth, the publisher, claimed that the price of the Society hymnal was adopted at the suggestion of J. H. Fillmore when he was serving as a member of the committee.[72] Errett quoted the trustee's contracted selling price at ninety cents per copy and nine dollars per dozen to be sold to booksellers at a 25 per cent discount from the dozen price. R. M. Bishop later wrote the Standard Publishing Company, publishers of the Christian Standard, asking their opinion of the price and mentioning some dissatisfaction that large and small dealers were to be treated alike. The trustees were willing to suggest a discount of 25 per cent to small dealers who purchased one hundred copies and one-third off to larger dealers who purchased from three hundred to five hundred copies. This reaction failed to placate Errett, who felt it was just another one of Bosworth's schemes to make more money.[73]

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[70] Ibid.

[71] Ibid.

[72] Ibid.

At the same time, Errett was attacking the Society hymnal from another angle. He reviewed it in his "Book Table" and condemned it in great detail. He complained that the paper and printing were not first class and the syllabification, punctuation, and notation were poor. He found no system in the book but many typographical errors. He wrote: "If our people approve this wretchedly imperfect book, they must expect to be judged accordingly."[74]

In contrast to Errett's reaction, B. W. Johnson, editor of the Evangelist, reviewed the book in an extremely favorable fashion. He wrote that he had not personally approved the revision but that the committee had recommended it because a prominent publisher was threatening to bring out a new book.[75] He added that the revision was undertaken principally to avert this and that he regarded Fillmore's course in bringing out the new hymnal anyway as immoral. As to the price, Johnson remarked editorially that he remembered when the old version of the Society hymnal sold for a dollar a copy and Errett and the Standard had said it was too cheap![76]

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[73] Ibid.

[74] Christian Standard, XVII (June, 1882), 199.

Through the month of July 1882 Errett carried on a little war with H. S. Bosworth concerning the quality of the Society hymnal. Bosworth responded to Errett's bitterly critical review, and Errett responded to Bosworth's response, detailing the errors of the publication.[77] Errett also became exercised over the "crookedness" of some of his fellow editors. He pointed out that G. W. Rice of the Review had come to the defense of the Society hymnal when shortly before he had been opposing it. He took note of the great lamentation arising over the evil of having many competing hymnals and derided it.[78] The whole tenor of the editorial was strident and defensive.

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[75] "The New Hymnal," Evangelist, XVII (June, 1882), 386.

[76] Ibid.

[77] "Our Notice of the Revised Christian Hymnal," Christian Standard, XVII (July, 1882), 204.

The Evangelist regretted the controversy. Johnson outlined the purpose and history of the hymnal, pointing out that the Louisville Convention had authorized the revision "in order to preserve the unity in our hymnology."[79] The price of the older version had been one dollar, which Errett had maintained was too cheap; but it was subsequently cut to fifty cents, an action Johnson felt was brought about by the interests of the publishers, not the churches. Johnson held that all publishers could have had the revised hymnal at the cost of publication but they were unwilling to offer premiums and thus reduce their profits.[80] He felt the question of bookseller's profits produced the whole controversy and added: "The church was not made for the booksellers or publishers."[81] Johnson further charged that Errett's criticism of the Society hymnal came after the publication of Fillmore's rival book and that the errors in the Society hymnal were minor.[82] Anyway, according to Johnson, the trustees had left the proofreading to Hobbs and Fillmore.[83]

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[78] "Concerning Hymn-book Crookedness," Christian Standard, XVII (July, 1882), 212.

[79] "The Hymnal Question," Evangelist, XVII (July, 1882), 418.

[80] Ibid.

[81] Ibid.

The trustees, under fire from Errett and the Standard, and faced with a rival publication, published a circular dated July 7, 1882,[84] stating their side of the case to the public. They argued that J. H. Fillmore and others had disparaged the old edition of the Society hymnal and desired to break up the old arrangement (with Bosworth as publisher) for purposes of profit or ambitious authorship. The trustees stated that they were importuned to revise the hymnal or face the threat of a rival publication. They further stated that the general procedure for issuing a new revision was by competitive bidding and having received advice (later shown to be from Russell Errett, business manager of the Standard and son of Isaac Errett) to rule out various publishers on the ground that the brotherhood papers were competitive, only Fillmore and Bosworth were left to bid on the job. Advisors had recommended that the trustees give Fillmore the contract since Bosworth was growing feeble. "This revealed to us," the trustees stated, "a combination of a few men to obtain the publication and control of the Hymnal."[85] According to the circular, Fillmore had written the trustees of his intent to publish a new hymnal closely parallelling that of the Society. He carried out this threat. As for the errors in the Society hymnal, Fillmore himself was personally responsible for the proofreading. The circular was signed by R. M. Bishop, chairman, and W. H. Lape, secretary.[86]

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[82] "The Voice of the Church and the Hymn Book," Evangelist, XVII (July, 1882), 450.

[83] Ibid.

[84] "A Circular of the Hymnal Trustees," Evangelist, XVII (July, 1882), 469.

This circular was full of serious and thinly-veiled charges. The trustees felt that they had been thoroughly deceived by Fillmore. Fillmore obviously believed that he would get the contract for the publication of the new revision. The connection of Isaac Errett and the Standard with all this was still something of a puzzle. Noting that the Evangelist had accused the Standard of agreeing to promote Fillmore's book even before it came out, Errett denied the charge:

> Its editor has nothing whatever to do with the sale of any of these books, and wrote his criticisms of the Hymnal in utter ignorance of any of Fillmore's

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[85] Ibid.

[86] Ibid., 470.

> arrangements for the publication of a new book.[87]

If the editor of the _Standard_ had no prior agreement with Fillmore, how about the Standard Publishing Company? This question was to be raised by David Lipscomb.

In his first notice of the controversy between the _Standard_ and virtually all the other brotherhood periodicals, David Lipscomb wrote: "Our society brethren are in a terrible mess over the hymn-book question."[88] He noted that Bishop was charging Errett and Fillmore with bad faith and felt that personal animosity was behind Errett's attitude toward the Society hymnal. Several of the trustees were elders of Central Church in Cincinnati, and they fell out and Errett moved "in rather uncomely haste."[89] Lipscomb wrote of Errett and the others:

> They seem to think they are entitled to manage the affairs for their own benefit. And they have fallen out about the division of the spoils. It is a sad commentary on the working of these human institutions. Each is trying to prove the other has acted simply from his pecuniary interest--and I am not sure but they all prove their

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[87] "Hymn-Book Jottings," _Christian Standard_, XVII (July, 1882), 220.

[88] "The Way It Appears Here," _Gospel Advocate_, XXIV (July, 1882), 451.

[89] _Ibid_.

> propositions. Power and spoils work evil in the hands of most men.[90]

In August Errett continued his praise of the New Christian Hymn and Tune-Book (Fillmore Bros.) and his citation of errors in the Christian Hymnal: Revised (H. S. Bosworth). In his review of the first book he stated that he found only two minor errors and added: "There are ten times more errors in the second edition of the Hymnal, than in the first edition of the H and T Book. Let him that readeth understand."[91] In a vain attempt to pacify Errett the Society had authorized a second edition of the revised hymnal in which some of the more glaring typographical errors were corrected. Meanwhile, Johnson printed evidence in the Evangelist that the Standard's columns were already closed to letters in praise of the Society hymnal.[92]

David Lipscomb levelled the serious charge of collusion for profit against Errett and the Christian Standard. He accused the Standard of being both the publisher and a partner in the profits of Fillmore's book and stated that the two hymnals were so identical there was no possible excuse for publication of the second book except personal animosity or profit. He termed the Standard's course an outrage, throwing confusion into the churches.[93] After the Advocate made this charge, which Errett did not deign to answer, there was a lull in the controversy until January 1883.

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[90] "Errata," Gospel Advocate, XXIV (July, 1882), 465.

[91] "Book Table," Christian Standard, XVII (Aug., 1882), 263.

[92] Barton Johnson, "Our New Hymnal," Evangelist, XVII (Aug., 1882), 502.

Errett claimed that the Fillmore hymnal was supported by the churches even if it was not supported by the periodicals. Citing recent sales figures of both books, Errett pointed out that though the Society hymnal had total sales larger than the Fillmore book, the Fillmore book was gaining at a much more rapid rate.[94] According to Errett, they had sold 28,000 and 25,000 copies respectively. In an advertisement for the Fillmore book, the Standard noted that "the theory that hymn-books are made for the benefit of the churches, and not the churches for the benefit of a hymnbook, is now thoroughly ratified. . . ."[95] The Standard listed three advantages of the Fillmore book:

1. low price;
2. reduction in the price of the Christian

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[93] "The Hymn Books," Gospel Advocate, XXIV (Sept., 1882), 575.

[94] "Our Press and the Churches Generally," Christian Standard, XVIII (Jan., 1883), 42.

[95] "The New Hymn and Tune Book," Christian Standard, XVIII (Feb., 1883), 91. A house advertisement.

> Standard and all Standard Publishing Company materials, and larger circulation of them, made possible by the profits from the Fillmore hymnal;
> 3. reduction in the price of tracts, for the same reason.[96]

It appears from this advertisement that the Standard was benefitting from the sale of the Fillmore book to an even greater extent than the churches, but it seems to have been justified on the theory that what was good for the Standard was good for the churches. In a burst of generosity, Errett promised to give $300 from the profits of the Hymn and Tune-Book to the cause of home missions.[97]

Errett was still concerned about the attacks on the Standard because of its opposition to the Society hymnal--an obvious about-face. He affirmed that there was no official hymnal for the brotherhood and that the Convention of the Society, representing only a few churches, had recommended, not ordered, a revision.[98] In asserting that the hymnal did not belong to the Society, he noted that the committee had reported to the Convention out of courtesy only, not being required to do so. Campbell had conveyed the rights of the hymnal to the trustees, not to the brotherhood or to the Society, since he had feared the Society might go into the publishing business.[99] In all this, Errett was trying to disentangle his opposition to the hymnal from opposition to the Society. He had been accused of opposing the Society in opposing the Society's hymnal. For several months the Standard, by now exerting every effort in advertising the Fillmore book, published lists of churches in different states which had adopted the Fillmore book. In the Spring and Summer of 1883 an all-out promotional push for the Fillmore book filled the pages of the Standard.[100]

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[96] Ibid.

[97] "The New Hymn and Tune-Book," Christian Standard, XVIII (Mar., 1883), 104.

[98] "A Few Historical Inaccuracies," Christian Standard, XVIII (Mar., 1883), 127.

Although David Lipscomb was on record as opposing the whole idea of a Society hymnal, he could not resist making the most of the discomfiture of his old antagonist, Isaac Errett. He felt that Errett was personally deficient in character and proceeded to unveil his charges in his uniquely trenchant way. He wrote that the General Missionary Convention was used chiefly to build up the Christian Standard, a conviction which Benjamin Franklin had shared.[101]

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[99] Ibid.

[100] "The Evidence," Christian Standard, XVIII (April, 1883), 187. This was a weekly column for a while.

[101] Gospel Advocate, XXV (May, 1883), 321. Title missing.

Lipscomb further asserted that had the Standard's bid for publishing the new hymnal been accepted, no rival book would have been published. The Standard not only kicked the Society, but "is striving for monopoly among the papers by offering its readers the periodical at less than cost."[102]

Garrison added his fuel to the fire. Reprinting the committee's original letter to Alexander Campbell in 1864, Garrison pointed out that among the reasons for the transfer of the copyright given by Isaac Errett, the chairman, was: "It will check all attempts to introduce other books having in view the profits of individual enterprise."[103] In short, Isaac Errett had adopted the opposite course in 1882 from that which he had championed valiantly for over fifteen years.

In his answer to David Lipscomb's charges, Errett wrote that the Christian Standard had been asked to bid on the publication of the Society hymnal but had refused, and he denied the charge of trying to destroy the Society.[104]

Lipscomb admitted his error in fact when he claimed the Standard had bid on the publication, but he refused to admit the error of the substance of his claim:

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[102] Ibid.

[103] "An Interesting Historical Document," Christian-Evangelist, XX (May 17, 1883), 5.

[104] "Concerning Truth-telling," Christian Standard, XVIII (June, 1883), 245.

> It was not until the Publisher of the Hymnal showed that he did not intend that other publishers should have a fair chance as sellers of the Hymnal, that they accepted a book that did promise fairness.[105]

If the Standard did not publish Fillmore's book, Fillmore did it, according to Lipscomb, "for the direct purpose of showing those who would that there could not be a monopoly made of such things."[106] Errett reiterated his position and added that the Standard Publishing Company did not bid on the ground that "none of our papers should have it."[107] The Standard, according to Errett, simply sold the book for a percentage.

Once on the trail, however, David Lipscomb was not so easily removed. He charged that the Society supported the Standard, if not directly, at least through its agents and its machinery and pointed out as evidence the fact that the Standard had actually used the circulation of the minutes of the Society, which it published, to encourage the sale of the rival to the Society's hymnal.[108] He added: "We affirm that the Standard has been the real publisher of the rival book."[109] This was true, Lipscomb alleged, inasmuch as the Standard's promise of support had resolved Fillmore's doubts concerning the propriety of the publication and the Standard did this simply because it could not control the publication for profit.[110] Concerning the suggestion of Russell Errett and the Standard Publishing Company that none of the brotherhood papers be allowed to bid on the hymnal, Lipscomb wondered in print who the Standard was trying to protect.[111] He quoted Fillmore as his authority for the fact that the Standard encouraged the sale of the Society hymnal until it found it could not make as much money as it thought it should. Errett had been for one book, "but now, when not Campbell's, but Errett's interest is at stake, how wonderful the change."[112] Lipscomb quoted one of the elders of the Central Christian Church in Cincinnati (probably R. M. Bishop) as saying of Errett: "If ever a man was recreant to his convictions, and for no better motives than selfish ones, I take it Isaac Errett is the man."[113] Lipscomb claimed the support of the Christian-Evangelist (Garrison and Johnson combined their papers in 1882, and the first issue of the Christian-Evangelist appeared October 5 of that year with Garrison, Johnson, and Jerome H. Smart as editors[114]) and the American Christian Review in his charge against the Standard. Errett did not deny it.[115]

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[105] "Its Practical Workings," Gospel Advocate, XXV (June, 1883), 369.

[106] Ibid.

[107] "A Nice Little Roorbach," Christian Standard, XVIII (June, 1883), 245.

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[108] "Its Practical Workings," Gospel Advocate, XXV (June, 1883), 369.

[109] Ibid.

[110] Ibid.

[111] Ibid., p. 370.

[112] Ibid.

Errett answered Lipscomb's charges in an editorial. He wrote that he was normally not interested in personal critics,

> but when it comes to an impeachment of our motives and actions as "selfish and ambitious," as pursueing a course of conduct having "the stain of personal dishonor," as "affecting the morals of the church by our example," it is time to rise and face our assailants.[116]

The substance of Lipscomb's charges, scattered over a period of about a year, were published in pamphlet form by Lipscomb.[117] He charged that Errett and the Standard, after suggesting to the trustees that none of the brotherhood periodicals be allowed to bid on the publication of the revised hymnal, entered into a secret agreement with Fillmore in which Fillmore was to do the bidding and the Standard Publishing Company and Fillmore Brothers would share the profits.[118] He further charged that Errett and the Standard even used the Society's minutes to promote the sale of their book,[119] and that Errett knew of the Standard Publishing Company's arrangement with Fillmore before his criticism of the Society hymnal.[120] Lipscomb summarized his charges under twelve headings:

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[113] Ibid.

[114] Tucker, p. 54.

[115] "Its Practical Workings," Christian Standard, XVIII (June, 1883), 275.

[116] "David Lipscomb's Charges," Christian Standard, XVIII (June, 1883), 276.

1. the Standard in this controversy served notice on the Society that if it refused to subserve its interests, it would be destroyed;
2. Errett was active in the transfer of the hymnal from Alexander Campbell to the Society;
3. Errett had from the beginning supported the Society and its hymnal;
4. Errett had acquiesced in the revision of the hymnal;
5. the Standard had, in effect, bid for the

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[117] David Lipscomb, The Standard and the Hymn-Book, with an Exposition of Its Course Toward the Missionary Society (Nashville: A. M. Sewell Book and Job Printer, 1883).

[118] Ibid., p. 23.

[119] Ibid., p. 9.

[120] Ibid., p. 15.

publication;
6. had the Standard's offer been accepted, no rival book would have been published;
7. the Standard published the rival book seeking to destroy the sale of the Society's hymnal;
8. the Standard's support of the Society was based on pecuniary interest;
9. institutions can afford opportunities for ambitious men to control the interests of the church;
10. the Standard subsequently cut its rates to break down the other papers;
11. the Standard was being offered to subscribers at less than cost;
12. the whole thing was an effort to carry its point by its much money.[121]

Lipscomb's charges were like a scatter-gun blast: it was inevitable that he would hit something somewhere. The first charge was ridiculous; the second was true but not damaging to Errett; the third was true but again not damaging in any way; the fourth was true, and Errett admitted it; the fifth, sixth, and seventh had some substance to them; the eighth and ninth were unfounded allegations; the tenth and eleventh were probably true; and the twelfth was pointless.

Errett answered these charges one by one as best he could. As to the charge of an earlier agreement between the Standard Publishing Company and Fillmore, Errett claimed ignorance of such a situation[122] and maintained that he was not a member of the Standard Publishing Company and had no control over it and was not responsible for its business proceedings.[123] He added, however, that the Standard Publishing Company had no control over the Standard--he as editor had sole responsibility.[124]

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[121] Ibid., p. 20.

[122] "David Lipscomb's Charges," Christian Standard,

Lipscomb had cited the trustee's circular[125] and H. S. Bosworth's charge of an effort on the part of a few to secure control of the publication[126] and Russell Errett's letter to the trustees (in which Russell Errett frankly stated the possibility of combinations in the interest of one paper) suggesting Fillmore as the publisher.[127] Concerning Isaac Errett's ignorance of all this maneuvering, Lipscomb wrote:

> It would be one of the remarkable coincidences of the world, that such a criticism should be written by the father to destroy one book, and that the contract for publishing a rival book be made by the son, in the same office, without the son's knowing the father's feelings toward the

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XVIII (June, 1883), 276.

[123] Isaac Errett quoted in Lipscomb, The Standard and the Hymn-Book, p. 11.

[124] Ibid.

[125] Ibid., p. 23.

[126] Ibid.

[127] Ibid., p. 25.

> old book, and the father ignorant that the son had in view the publication of a rival book.[128]

Answering Lipscomb's charge that the Standard had used the circulation of the Society's minutes to promote the Fillmore book, Errett admitted that the Standard Publishing Company sent out its circulars along with the Society's Annual Report of 1882 but said he had no knowledge of this at the time.[129] Again he maintained he had no connection with the Standard Publishing Company. To this Lipscomb replied: "He receives a good salary; his son, Russell, owns over half the stock; he has three other children on the company payroll."[130]

Errett steadfastly denied any previous arrangement with Fillmore to bring out a rival book. He replied to Lipscomb that he reviewed the book when it came out (Society hymnal) and did not like it. He criticized the trustees, even though one of them was a member of the Standard Publishing Company, and insisted on a cheaper book. His advice, he claimed, was ill-taken by the trustees and his motives and truthfulness were assailed. As a result, Errett wrote, Fillmore had a way open to furnish cheap books, which was what Campbell had in mind, anyway.[131] Errett maintained that Campbell did not give the hymnal to the Society and did not intend the Society to receive any considerable revenue therefrom. It was, he wrote, made over in trust to certain persons for the benefit of the churches, to be published as cheaply as possible. Errett added that at the time he opposed the Society hymnal he knew nothing of any contract between the Standard Publishing Company and Fillmore.[132] He suspected the charge of collusion to secure the bid came from an agent of the Christian Publishing Company (the Christian-Evangelist), and was shocked that one of the hymnal trustees was in correspondence with Lipscomb, an avowed enemy of the Society and the hymnal.[133]

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[128] Ibid., p. 9.

[129] Ibid.

[130] Ibid., p. 15.

Lipscomb asserted that the securing of the Standard to be recognized as the organ of the Society was the turning point in the success of the paper.[134] The announcements of the Board of the Society, according to Lipscomb, were made through the Standard while Benjamin Franklin was still with the Society and his American Christian Review had a larger circulation than the Standard. Since the Standard was considered the organ, the agents made their reports through that paper.[135] This was another one of Lipscomb's unfounded charges. Franklin had parted company with the Society three years before the Standard began publication. Errett must have felt like a man running into a cyclone, but he did his best to answer Lipscomb. He pointed out that Lipscomb had not a shred of evidence for his charge that the machinery and agents of the Society were used to build up the Standard and complained that "David Lipscomb's manner of dealing without statements of fact, is unmannerly and insulting."[136] He ended the discussion in the pages of the Standard by commending Lipscomb to the mercy of God.[137]

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[131] "David Lipscomb's Charges," Christian Standard, XVIII (June, 1883), 276.

[132] Ibid.

[133] Lipscomb, The Standard and the Hymn-Book, p. 18.

[134] Ibid., p. 22.

The trouble with David Lipscomb was that once he decided a man or a society was no good he was willing to unload every conceivable act of evil or crime upon them. As with the old Roman law against the Christians: Christianos non licet esse--a blanket indictment included all lesser indictments. Lipscomb finally ended the discussion in the pages of the Advocate in September 1883 by complaining that

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[135] Ibid.

[136] "The Lipscomb Fiasco," Christian Standard, XVIII (Aug., 1883), 316.

[137] Ibid.

Errett had violated his promises and professional honor by not according him equal space in column inches of the Standard and promising to publish the pamphlet already referred to summarizing both sides of the dispute.[138]

Throughout the controversy the pages of the Standard continued to reflect the success of the Fillmore book. Errett reported 50,000 published and the paper ordered for 5,000 more, all within one year.[139]

> This, in the face of violent opposition of nearly the whole of our papers, is very good evidence that the free judgment of our people cannot be overruled by the dictation of the press.[140]

One reason the judgment could not be overruled by the dictation of the press was that the most powerful periodical, probably equal in circulation at the time to both the Advocate and the Christian-Evangelist had been extremely busy dictating the use of the Fillmore book.

The Standard found its connection with the Fillmore hymnal, in spite of its dubious morality, to be a profitable one, and it used that profit to put a financial squeeze on the other periodicals. That this leverage was purchased at a sacrifice of principle and with profits that might have gone into the treasury of the American Christian Missionary Society was at least overtly rationalized. In January 1885 the Standard announced that the Fillmore book had sold more than 100,000 copies and was making a profit for the company.[141] It added that this made possible new low rates for all Standard Publishing Company publications, especially the Christian Standard. During the latter part of 1884 and early 1885 the Standard and the Christian-Evangelist engaged in a rate war. There had been some talk of an agreement between the two not to lower prices. The Standard lowered its price anyway and made much ado about its cheap price being a service to the churches.[142] The paper was published and sold below cost in a tremendous drive for increased circulation.[143] At this time, the circulation of the Standard was 60,000[144] and that of the Christian-Evangelist probably around 25,000.[145]

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[138] David Lipscomb, "Can't Be Just or Fair," Gospel Advocate, XXV (Sept., 1883), 566.

[139] Th- /sic7 Hymn and Tune-Book," Christian Standard, XVIII (July, 1883), 301.

[140] Ibid.

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[141] "The Canvass for the Standard," Christian Standard, XX (Jan., 1885), 5.

[142] Ibid.

[143] Lipscomb, The Standard and the Hymn Book, p. 25.

[144] "The Canvass for the Standard," Christian Standard, XX (Jan., 1885), 5.

[145] Tucker, p. 55.

In all this controversy may be seen the result of the development of the periodicals into publishing houses, with competition extending and growing keener with each new field entered. As the publications were built up into big businesses, more was at stake than providing a platform for the editor. In fact, editors who wielded such great influence among the churches and leadership of the brotherhood, as Errett and Garrison did (these were the big two after the death of Benjamin Franklin in 1878), were sometimes in danger of losing control of their papers to the business office. This apparently happened to Errett in 1882, unless one chooses to believe the charges against his character made by David Lipscomb. It almost happened to Garrison in 1899.[146] Garrison managed to keep control of the Christian-Evangelist until its sale to R. A. Long in 1910 but not without some real fights with the business office. If the policy of having editors as bishops was fraught with some danger, how much more dangerous was the policy of having business offices, designed primarily to make a profit, as practical policy and idea-forming bodies of the church!

Although W. E. Tucker, in his J. H. Garrison and Disciples of Christ, is in error on the facts about the bidding for publication of the revised hymnal[147] he is correct in stating that this quarrel did more than any other single event to strain relations between the Standard and the Christian-Evangelist. The struggle brought dismay to the brethren watching from the sidelines:

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[146] Ibid., pp. 222, 223.

> Two large publishing companies, two hymn books, two parties, two rival interests, two sets of agents running up and down the earth . . . For once my confidence in the notion of "leading journals" is broken. Let us have a great many little papers rather than one or two jealous and rival publishing companies. The little ones are kept on their good behavior through their own dependent feeling. Large monied corporations are dangerous things in the church or in the State; and a large personal influence is a dangerous thing to have.[148]

According to Tucker, this was the beginning of a gap that was to widen as theological and economic interests set the two papers, once so close to each other, against one another.[149] The Standard gradually assumed the role of denominational critic, and the Christian-Evangelist continued to support every phase of co-operative work until it, in time, replaced the Standard as the most influential weekly among the Disciples.[150] The disagreement between the two papers, with the Christian-Evangelist increasingly becoming the spokesman for the Society, continued to widen until it reached a crescendo of discord in the early years of the twentieth century. All this was to the utter dismay of the brotherhood, and men began seeking some way out of the impasse. The way chosen, however, was not that suggested by Allen Jones of a return to a multiplicity of small periodicals. It was, rather, the formation of a brotherhood publishing house--the Christian Board of Publication.

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[147] Tucker, p. 219. Tucker mistakenly assumes that both the Standard Publishing Company and the Christian Publishing Company bid on the contract, and that it was awarded to the Christian Publishing Company.

[148] Allen B. Jones, "Our Papers," Christian-Evangelist, XX (April 19, 1883), 12. Quoted in Tucker, p. 220.

[149] Tucker, p. 220. See also the Federation Controversy, Supra, Chapter V.

The Christian Board of Publication

Benjamin Franklin, the founder and editor of the American Christian Review, died in 1878. The Review continued under new management, but its influence, already declining in Franklin's last years, became much smaller. The Millennial Harbinger, founded and edited by Alexander Campbell, continued several years after Campbell's death under the editorship of his son-in-law, W. K. Pendleton, but the declining influence of the Harbinger and the press of other duties caused Pendleton to discontinue it by 1870. The Gospel Advocate, founded by Tolbert Fanning and re-established after the Civil War by Fanning and David Lipscomb, continued publication without interruption and is still published, but by the dawn of the twentieth century the divergence between the Advocate and the rest of the brotherhood was so great that there was scarcely any contact between its ideas and subscribers and the ideas and subscribers of the other periodicals. That left the Christian Standard, founded by Isaac Errett and others in 1866, and the Christian-Evangelist, founded and edited by J. H. Garrison, as the two outstanding and influential periodicals of the Disciples as they entered the twentieth century. These two periodicals, both on a firm financial basis, were rivals and competitors in every sense of the words.

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[150] Tucker, p. 220.

In 1895 Garrison had gone to Detroit to meet Russell Errett, Isaac Errett's successor as editor of the Standard, to talk over the feasibility of uniting the Christian-Evangelist and the Christian Standard. Errett approved a tentative plan, and Garrison believed that the union problem might be solved, but the arrangement failed.[151] Had it succeeded, many bitter controversies might have been avoided.

In 1903 the Pacific Christian raised the question of judicial function among the Disciples in the matter of discipline concerning problems which transcended the local congregations. It cited, as an example of the need in this area, recent attacks of the Standard on the Berkeley Bible Seminary.[152] The Pacific Christian suggested that rather than arbitrary judgment, unchallenged by the brotherhood, on the part of some periodical, it would be better if each state convention were to appoint a committee of three and the members of this committee were to choose a national committee of five, to be responsible for arbitration.[153] It was the old problem of authority which had dogged the Disciples from the first and created a power vacuum which the periodicals had largely, and often irresponsibly, filled. The Christian-Evangelist agreed that there was need for some form of arbitration and could see no obvious objection to the plan advanced by the Pacific Christian.[154]

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[151] Tucker, p. 231.

The plan struck the Standard in quite a different light. The editor felt rightly that his own action had brought about the proposal and that it was aimed directly at the Standard. Lord responded to the proposal with hostility:

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[152] "Church Arbitration," Christian Evangelist, XL (July, 1903), 69.

[153] Ibid.

[154] Ibid.

> The proposition of the editors of the Pacific Christian and the Christian-Evangelist to make them the medium of official surveillance of our churches and members, is not the only item of this unholy scheme. It is far more comprehensive, and embraces a plan to control our colleges and the very literature of the brethren. If it were possible for them to carry out their scheme, it would place in their hands the education of our preachers, the editorship of our weekly journals, and the preparation and distribution of our Sunday-school supplies.[155]

As was too often the case, Lord read into the proposal both object and means that simply were not there. He had a point, however, for by 1903 the Standard was rapidly losing touch with the leaders in many state conventions, and its point of view would not likely be expressed by such committees. Lord was also extremely fearful and jealous of the competitive position of the Standard. In response to this outburst, Garrison wrote:

> Our Cincinnati contemporary grows almost hysterical in a lengthy editorial of the last week over a suggestion . . . that it would be better to refer some of our church troubles to arbitration than to fight them out through the papers, or go to law.[156]

No sooner had this issue come up than the Standard found another threat posed by some of the brethren. The

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[155] "The Nature and Limits of Our Missionary Societies," Christian Standard, XXXIX (Aug., 1903), 1203.

[156] "Another Mare's Nest," Christian-Evangelist, XL (Aug., 1903), 166.

Nebraska State Missionary Convention passed a resolution deploring the controversies between the periodicals and recommending the establishment of a brotherhood-owned Publication Society.[157] Lord fairly howled. It struck him as a reflection on the Standard and a scheme to form a public trust to secure control of the Disciple Sunday School supplies.[158] That he was concerned about Sunday School supplies demonstrated both their profitable nature and the change in the scope of publication from periodical alone to publishing house.

The leadership of the Disciples, including most of the editors, was thoroughly sick of periodical controversies. Aside from the Nebraska action, letters were coming in to the editors of both the Standard and the Christian-Evangelist deploring the controversial state of things. In the first decade of the twentieth century the two periodicals fought over the federation issue, the Campbell Institute, the Rockefeller gifts, Nanking University, and almost everything else.[159] Garrison admitted his dislike of the controversies.

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[157] J. A. Lord, "Guard Our Conventions," Christian Standard, XXXIX (Aug., 1903), 1238.

[158] Ibid.

[159] Stephen J. Corey, Fifty Years of Attack and Controversy (St. Louis: Committee on Publication of the Corey Manuscript, 1953), pp. 13-35.

He felt that they grew out of a fondness for faultfinding, a spirit of commercialism, and personal ambition.[160] He wrote:

> We have always had a class that delighted in exposing the weakness and frailties of the brethren. They have been the "thorn in the flesh" of the brotherhood. This sort of malady cannot be cured as long as it pays to be sick.[161]

He was referring to the effect of controversy on circulation. The controversies were excellent circulation builders, and it would have taken an extremely simple editor not to realize this and an extremely lofty one to rise above it. Unfortunately, Disciple editors rarely fell into either class.

W. A. Baldwin, the corresponding secretary of the Nebraska Christian Missionary Society, reported that some of the best brethren in Nebraska were convinced that the controversies in the Standard and the Christian-Evangelist, as well as the Pacific Christian and the Christian Century, were merging into mere personal quarrels; they were really a contest between rival publishing houses for leadership in that supposedly lucrative business.[162]

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[160] "Concerning Newspaper Controversy," Christian-Evangelist, XL (Sept., 1903), 325.

[161] Ibid.

[162] Quoted in J. A. Lord, "Unchristian Controversy," Christian Standard, XXXIX (Oct., 1903), 1453.

Benjamin L. Smith, the corresponding secretary of the American Christian Missionary Society, wrote Garrison a letter dated December 28, 1903, in which he stated:

> You know of course that men talk to me more freely than they would write to you, and I can get more nearly the true views of our brotherhood on our papers than can any editor. The first thing I want to say is that *the best public opinion among ourselves, is that there is the greatest opportunity now before the Evangelist than there ever was before any paper published among the Disciples of Christ*, for the following reasons: 1st, the *Standard* has deliberately made its appeal to the prejudice of our people. 2nd, it has thereby forfeited its place of leadership among us. It has become so conservative and critical and censorious that it can no longer lead the best thought of our brotherhood. It has been openly prophesied that in five years the editor of the *Standard* will be found opposing our Missionary Societies, and other enterprises of the church.[163]

It is ironic that with the substitution of the *Review* for the *Standard*, the same letter could well have been written to Isaac Errett about the opportunity before the *Standard* by the secretary of the Society in 1866. Exactly the same thing was happening to the *Standard* in 1903 that happened to the *Review* in 1866. It was then the *Standard* supplanting the *Review*; in 1903, it was the *Christian-Evangelist* supplanting the *Standard*. The wheel had turned a full circle.

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[163] Letter to J. H. Garrison from Benjamin L. Smith, quoted in A. T. DeGroot, *The Grounds of Divisions Among the Disciples of Christ* (Chicago: Privately Printed, 1940), p. 204.

The Standard started a strong and well-publicized campaign in 1905 to secure 100,000 subscribers. A few months later the Christian-Evangelist began a campaign for the same number of subscribers.[164] Actual figures on circulation are extremely difficult to obtain, but it is probable that the circulation of the Standard was then about 55,000 and the circulation of the Christian-Evangelist about 40,000.

The idea expressed by the Nebraska State Society of establishing a brotherhood-owned Publication Society took root in the Convention of the American Christian Missionary Society in 1907. There was a general feeling that the journalistic competition between the two leading periodicals had reached the stage where something had to be done. The General Board recommended to the Convention that a committee of twenty-five representative men be appointed by the president to consider fully all questions involved in establishing a Board of Publication.[165] This plan was adopted and the committee duly appointed. One of the members of the committee was R. A. Long, a wealthy businessman and Disciples leader.[166]

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[164] See the Christian-Evangelist, XLIII (Jan., 1906), 43.

[165] "Recommendations of the General Board to the Convention," American Home Missionary, XIII (Nov., 1907), 449. The American Home Missionary was published by the American Christian Missionary Society as a monthly organ. The November issue was used for the Minutes of the A.C.M.S. Annual Convention and the January issue of the periodical served as a yearbook for the Disciples of Christ.

At that time (1907) a total of thirty periodicals were being published by the Disciples. There were sixteen weeklies, eleven monthlies, two semi-monthlies, and one annual.[167] Three of the weeklies, eight of the monthlies, and the two semi-monthlies were published by state societies. Three of the weeklies were Sunday School and Christian Endeavor papers. The national societies were publishing four periodicals as official organs: Business in Christianity, an annual published by the Board of Church Extension; American Home Missionary, a monthly published by the American Christian Missionary Society; Missionary Tidings, a monthly published by the Christian Women's Board of Missions; and Missionary Intelligencer, a monthly published by the Foreign Christian Missionary Society.[168] The privately published periodicals were:

> Christian Standard, Cincinnati, J. A. Lord, editor.
> Christian-Evangelist, St. Louis, J. H. Garrison, editor.
> Christian Century, Chicago, H. L. Willett, editor.

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[166] "Committee on Publication House," American Home Missionary, XIII (Nov., 1907), 456.

[167] "Periodicals Published by Disciples of Christ," American Home Missionary, XIII (Dec., 1907), 545.

[168] Ibid.

> Christian Courier, Dallas, G. A. Farris, editor.
> Christian Union, Des Moines, J. T. Nichols, editor.
> Christian Leader and The Way, Cincinnati, F. L. Rowe, editor.
> Gospel Advocate, Nashville, David Lipscomb, editor.
> Pacific Christian, San Francisco, W. B. Berry, editor.[169]

Of these, the Christian Leader and The Way and the Gospel Advocate were opponents of the organized life of the church. The Christian Century, by far the most liberal publication of the Disciples, became an interdenominational weekly of great importance a few years later, but in 1907 it had not yet achieved this prominence. As far as the Disciples were concerned and in terms of circulation and influence, the Christian Standard and the Christian-Evangelist were unrivalled.

Garrison, reporting on the action of the Convention in the appointment of a committee to consider the establishment of a Board of Publication, wrote:

> It scarcely need be said that this action, favored by many of the most conservative brethren among us, was the result of those periodical disturbances of the peace of the brotherhood by one of our leading journals, which seems to have adopted, as a fixed policy,

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[169] Ibid.

> that method of maintaining and increasing its circulation.[170]

Garrison recognized the devisive influence of the periodicals as they existed, but he cautioned the brotherhood lest freedom of the press be hampered.[171]

The reaction of the Standard was different. Lord believed that the creation of a Publication Society would be a radical move and might possibly be the explanation of "recent violent attacks on the Christian Standard and its management."[172] He pointed out that the men who were supporting this move were men who had opposed the Standard for the past decade, and he considered their antagonism to be based on the Standard's steadfast opposition to false teachers and false teaching.[173] The Standard saw the move of the Convention as a definite effort to supplant it and predicted that the success of the project would mean the merger of all the papers supporting it into one large combination.[174] Lord considered this an effort to prescribe the character of the papers people should read--a sorry comment on their intelligence.[175]

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[170] "In the Midst of the Convention," Christian-Evangelist, XLIV (Oct., 1907), 1357.

[171] Ibid.

[172] "The Norfolk Convention," Christian Standard, XLII (Oct., 1907), 1722.

[173] "The New Scheme," Christian Standard, XLII (Oct., 1907), 1765.

[174] J. A. Lord, "Troubles in Israel," Christian Standard, XLII (Nov., 1907), 1926.

At the next Convention, in November 1908, W. Palmer Clarkson, the secretary of the Publication Committee, reported the committee unready to make a report and requested additional time, which was granted.[176]

Garrison's endorsement of the committee grew warmer. In 1908 he wrote: "A divided journalism means, ultimately, a divided brotherhood."[177] He reported to his readers that over two years previously he had tried to bring about a better understanding between the two leading journals that they might work together, but he met with no response.[178] He wrote that the Publication Committee had been appointed without his prior knowledge of the move, but he heartily endorsed it in order to bring about harmony and unity.[179] W. T. Moore used the pages of the Christian-Evangelist to protest editorial autocracy, which he termed "one-man power."[180] Moore, who was one of the most venerable Disciple leaders and had served as an editor himself, added: "We refuse to accept ipse dixit of any one dictator, be he editor or anyone else."[181]

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[175] Ibid.

[176] "Report of Committee on Publication," American Home Missionary, XIV (Nov., 1908), 437.

[177] "Government by Newspapers," Christian-Evangelist, XLV (Oct., 1908), 1380.

[178] Ibid.

[179] Ibid.

Charles S. Medbury served as chairman of the Publication Committee and found progress all but impossible. Reporting to the Convention in 1909, he pointed out:

1. the large size of the committee is a disadvantage;
2. the majority are favorable to a publishing house plan, but have not found a basis of action in which there is unanimity;
3. the reaction of the state papers has been mixed, with a strong majority favorable;
4. one of the large publishing houses has made a most generous proposition;
5. another large one has withheld approval entirely;
6. the committee can recommend no definite steps, since it would be impossible to unify the publishing interests;
7. the committee recommends a standing committee of seven.[182]

Even as he made his report, however, Medbury was aware of a development that had not been made public. Garrison wanted to sell his paper. He was growing unable at his age to bear the heavy burden of responsibility,[183] and he was deeply in debt. In spite of this, Garrison had some convictions regarding the future of his company which he refused to sacrifice for monetary considerations.[184] He had no intention of selling it to anyone who would not carry it on in its historic role, and this severely limited the possible purchasers. In January 1909 R. A. Long had written Medbury offering to buy some of Garrison's stock. Terms were finally agreed upon, and on December 9, 1909, the Christian-Evangelist announced the change in ownership.[185] Long had bought the paper in order to give it to the brotherhood. All this was still not public knowledge at the 1909 Convention, and Medbury did not reveal it. After Medbury's rather pessimistic report on behalf of the Publication Committee, W. T. Moore voiced his dissent. Moore urged:

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[180] W. T. Moore, "Who Shall Decide?" Christian-Evangelist, XLV (Oct., 1908), 1402.

[181] Ibid.

[182] "Report of Publication Committee," American Home Missionary, XV (Dec., 1909), 519.

[183] Tucker, p. 229.

> That a paper be started the first of January next the object of which shall be to forward all our missionary and educational interests, thereby relieving the columns of our papers now in the field, from such matter that is now repeated in all of them, thus abridging their power to give us other things that would be interesting and helpful.[186]

After the Convention Garrison announced that he had sold his stock to R. A. Long. W. R. Warren was to become

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[184] Ibid.

[185] Ibid., p. 233.

[186] "Report of Publication Committee," American Home Missionary, XV (Dec., 1909), 520.

General Manager January 1, 1910, and Garrison was to continue as editor subject to the wishes of the new Board.[187]

Six days previous to the public announcement of the change in ownership of the Christian-Evangelist, R. A. Long had called Charles S. Medbury, George H. Combs, W. T. Moore, W. F. Richardson, W. R. Warren, C. M. Chilton, B. A. Jenkins, T. P. Haley, A. B. Philputt, C. J. Tannar, Oreon E. Scott, J. H. Garrison, W. P. Clarkson, George H. Muckley, and E. M. Bowman to a meeting in Kansas City and made the following proposition: he had bought two-thirds of the Christian Publishing Company stock and might buy more; he proposed to turn it over to the brotherhood immediately, or in the future, as they thought best, and he wanted the men to aid him in nominating a Board of Directors.[188] The men recognized that they had no right to receive the gift on behalf of the brotherhood, but they heartily approved Long's course.[189] The Christian-Evangelist was to be owned by the brotherhood. In reporting this, Garrison wrote:

> This introduces a new era in our publishing interests. It means an attempt to realize the full benefit of the co-operative method

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[187] "Change of Ownership," Christian-Evangelist, XLVI (Dec., 1909), 1560.

[188] "A Munificent Proposition," Christian-Evangelist, XLVI (Dec., 1909), 1568.

[189] Ibid.

> in relation to our publishing interests. . . .
> No selfish interest can possibly enter into
> the future conduct of the paper.[190]

Over sixty years after the first attempt had failed, the Disciples finally owned a publishing house--the gift of R. A. Long. There was one rather ticklish problem left; how to transfer ownership to a body that lacked the organizational machinery to receive it. The method of transfer was finally solved by using essentially the same procedure that had been used by Alexander Campbell in 1864 in transferring the copyright of his hymnal to the American Christian Missionary Society. A Board of Directors, self-perpetuating, was appointed to act as trustees in behalf of the brotherhood.[191]

The American Home Missionary published a history of the whole transaction in an announcement.[192] The Christian Publishing Company was to become the nucleus of a Brotherhood Publishing House, with a Board of Managers to direct its affairs until the brotherhood in convention might provide a regular, orderly, and representative way of transferring ownership. The Society was elated.[193]

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[190] "Retrospect and Prospect," Christian-Evangelist, XLVI (Dec., 1909), 1656.

[191] See the Christian-Evangelist, XLVII (Jan., 1910), cover and page 13 for picture and sentiments of the Board.

[192] "The Brotherhood Publishing House," American Home Missionary, XVI (Jan., 1910), 81.

The Publication Committee was discharged at the 1910 Convention. It was reported that R. A. Long had purchased stock in the amount of $130,000 and held it subject to its acceptance by the brotherhood as a gift.[194] The net profits were to be devoted to the missionary, educational, and benevolent interests of the Disciples.[195] The Publication Committee noted that the Pacific Christian was under the Board of Managers of the Christian Publishing Company and urged the Convention to organize a Board of Publication and accept the gift.[196] Actually, the Convention never did this and never did formally accept the gift of the Christian Publishing Company. It is still (1965) administered by a self-perpetuating Board of Directors acting as trustees in behalf of the Disciples.

The Christian Standard congratulated Long and the brotherhood without reference to the purpose of the gift. An editorial stated:

> Thus far our press has been conducted on the same principle as our pulpit, every

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[193] Ibid.

[194] "Report of Publication Committee," American Home Missionary, XVI (Dec., 1910), 453.

[195] Ibid.

[196] Ibid.

> individual selecting what pulpit and what paper he will support. No appreciation of the munificent gift would reconcile our people to a brotherhood pulpit endowed by one man and controlled by one board. We see no better reason for an endowed press.[197]

J. B. Briney used the pages of the Standard for an all-out attack on the move. He correctly pointed out that the idea of connecting the periodical with the American Christian Missionary Society had been abandoned and the Board Members of the Christian Publishing Company had acted in the name of the brotherhood without authority formally being conveyed.[198] Briney believed that these men could not act for the brotherhood, and he determined to have nothing to do with "this effrontery."[199]

The Gospel Advocate noted Briney's objections and pointed out that this new form of ecclesiasticism was the logical result of a departure from New Testament simplicity.[200] The author wrote: "The great trouble with Brother Briney and many others is, they are in distress over a 'brotherhood' about which the word of God knows nothing."[201] J. C. McQuiddy believed that the whole thing was a denominational scheme, with "our" paper to champion the cause of "our" denomination.[202] He added:

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[197] "A Munificent Giver," Christian Standard, XLVI (Jan., 1910), 97

[198] "Brotherhood Publishing-Houses and Papers," Christian Standard, XLVI (Jan., 1910), 182.

[199] Ibid.

[200] F. W. Smith, "Brotherhood Publishing Houses and Papers," Gospel Advocate, LI (Feb., 1910), 163.

> The *Christian-Evangelist* would be the mouthpiece for all the "Disciples of Christ" throughout the whole country. It seeks to own and control all the literature of the church. Why not go into the Methodist Conference at once?[203]

M. C. Kurfees considered that the addition of a Brotherhood Publishing House made the denomination complete. It was the "capstone of denominational structure."[204] Kurfees pointed out editorially to Briney that this was the fruit of the seed he had sown when he first entered his unfortunate career of general co-operation and of apologizing for the New Testament order in work and worship.[205] He added that the *Standard* was now getting what it had been giving to the *Advocate*: a policy of silence toward all objections. Kurfees reminded the Standard that it seemed to depend on whose ox was gored whether the policy of silence was right.[206] The opponents of the brotherhood-owned publishing business among the Disciples received cold comfort from the Advocate, which had long since adopted a policy of "a plague on both your houses."

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[201] *Ibid*.

[202] "Our Paper," *Gospel Advocate*, LI (Jan., 1910), 104.

[203] "Owned and Controlled by the Brotherhood," *Gospel Advocate*, LI (Jan., 1910), 41.

[204] "The 'Brotherhood Publishing House'--The Denomination Complete," *Gospel Advocate*, LII (April, 1910), 428.

[205] "The 'Brotherhood Publishing House'--Expressions of Dissent," *Gospel Advocate*, LII (April, 1910), 492.

The Standard recognized that the "Brotherhood Publishing House" would be its rival.[207] The editor wrote that they would soon enough discover the fatuity of attempting to be what they purported to be, and he wondered what their stand was going to be on unscriptural teachers, federation, associate memberships, and the whole "brood of unscriptural devices."[208] Commenting on the effect of the gift, the Standard pointed out that everything in the expedient class among the Disciples--missionary, publishing, and educational interests--had been conducted by voluntary association and "the pleasant fiction of brotherhood ownership . . . [is] an unfortunate mistake."[209] The Standard re-affirmed its decision not to be absorbed, a condition it could only regard as a calamity.[210]

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[206] "Journalistic Courtesy," Gospel Advocate, LII (May, 1910), 618.

[207] "Who Oppose and Who Support the Standard, and Why," Christian Standard, XLVI (Jan., 1910), 186.

[208] Ibid.

[209] "A Munificent Gift--and Its Effect," Christian Standard, XLVI (Feb., 1910), 225.

The Christian-Evangelist made the most of its new relationship to the brotherhood. It became "our paper" controlled by "our Board of Publication."[211] Peter Ainslie commented approvingly, "other religious societies have done this long ago and with profit."[212] In every issue from January through April 21, 1910, the Christian-Evangelist contained a section headed "Open Meeting on the New Regime," consisting of from one-half to two pages of excerpts from letters commending the change in ownership.[213]

At the 1910 Convention in Topeka, Kansas, the Committee on the Brotherhood Publishing House recommended the formation of a Board of Publication and the acceptance of Long's gift. The report was adopted without discussion, but still no action was taken.[214] By December Long's investment had risen to $260,000.[215] The Board of Directors of the

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[210] Ibid.

[211] "Our Paper," Christian-Evangelist, XLVII (Jan., 1910), 40.

[212] Ibid., p. 42.

[213] See the Christian-Evangelist, XLVII (Jan., 1910), 44, 45, 82, 83, and 120 for examples.

[214] "Report of Committee on Brotherhood Publishing House," Christian-Evangelist, XLVII (Oct., 1910), 1506.

[215] "Directors in Session," Christian-Evangelist, XLVII (Dec., 1910), 1852.

Christian Publishing Company met in St. Louis in February 1911 and approved a new charter. Garrison commented:

> Let it suffice now to say that it solves permanently, and we trust satisfactorily to all concerned, the problem of the relation of this publishing house, to be known under the new charter as "The Christian Board of Publication," to the people whom it is to serve.[216]

Garrison noted with pleasure that the Standard had suggested the only possible means of transfer would be by placing it in the hands of a directorate to be administered for the cause to which it was given. This was the method finally chosen, and Garrison was happy to be able to do something with which the Standard would agree.[217] Commenting further on the new charter, Garrison noted that responsibility was in the hands of a self-perpetuating Board of thirteen Directors, thus settling the question of relationship to the brotherhood.[218] Garrison pointed out that this arrangement would avoid the necessity of any action whatever by any missionary convention either in the way of acceptance or endorsement.[219] This was correct, but it was a futile attempt to avoid an open break between the Disciples and the Standard by both maintaining and denying the official relationship of the Disciples and the Christian-Evangelist. It was "our paper," but the only organization that could possibly have accepted it was relieved of the necessity of doing so. It was a nice bit of organizational casuistry.

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[216] "Three Important Meetings," Christian-Evangelist, XLVIII (Feb., 1911), 152.

[217] "Inaccuracies Corrected and Facts Stated," Christian-Evangelist, XLVIII (Feb., 1911), 188.

[218] "Our New Charter," Christian-Evangelist, XLVIII (Mar., 1911), 436.

[219] Ibid.

The "Articles of Association of the Christian Board of Publication," dated January 26, 1911, provided that the profits should be distributed among the agencies of the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ).[220] The Standard noted that some people were buying supplies from "our own publishing house," since the profits were to go to missions.[221] In reply to this attitude, the editor wrote:

> 1. the supplies purchased should be the best available, or the cheapest provided the quality is not impaired; we should contend for this without reference to the business side of publishing;
> 2. we sell our papers on merit, not on supposed benevolence;
> 3. but /Italics his7 in the last four years, we have contributed $30,000 in voluntary missionary work, and this is a standing rule with us.[222]

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[220] "Articles of Association of the Christian Board of Publication," Christian-Evangelist, XLVIII (Mar., 1911), 436.

[221] "A Question Answered," Christian Standard, XLVII (Dec., 1911), 2083.

[222] Ibid.

Garrison doubted the Standard's claim to have contributed $30,000. He wrote: "We have examined the published reports of our missionary organizations without finding any trace of this large disbursement."[223] The Christian Board of Publication was busily enlarging its plant and assets, which were by the end of 1911 approximately double those of the Christian Publishing Company. Garrison regarded this as a contribution to the brotherhood.[224]

For a while at least the position of the American Christian Missionary Society in relation to the Standard and the Christian-Evangelist remained one of at least overt and official neutrality. I. N. McCash, reporting in Toronto on his administration as secretary, wrote:

> /We have7 refused to form entangling alliances with any schools of thought in the Brotherhood, to become party to controversies or advocate some religious newspaper, but considering all as brethren, pressed upon them impartially the claims of the Home Land.[225]

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[223] "Let the Facts Be Published," Christian-Evangelist, XLVIII (Dec., 1911), 1805.

[224] Ibid.

[225] "Minutes of the American Christian Missionary Society," American Home Missionary (microfilm extract, 1913), 604.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

A. T. DeGroot, Disciples historian, has written:

> It will have been noticed by this time in our account that it is the journalism of the Restoration movement which has functioned for leadership in the definition of religious position and the direction of activities. Being without overhead government, the independent churches of this movement have presented a listening ear to the voices of their editors.[1]

This dissertation has been largely a documentation of this comment, which is a more lengthy phrasing of W. T. Moore's pithy statement: "The Disciples of Christ do not have bishops, they have editors."[2]

The editors of the Disciples have, as a group, been men of imposing stature. The editors of the leading periodicals between 1850 and 1910--Barton Stone, Walter Scott, Alexander Campbell, Tolbert Fanning, Benjamin Franklin, David Lipscomb, Isaac Errett, and J. H. Garrison--were all strong-minded, strong-willed men capable of leading a movement and unafraid to voice their opinions on anything. The periodicals which had the most influence on the Disciples' development were those personally identified with these men--that is to say, the papers reflected the personality of their editors. These men created their periodicals in their own image, and the identification was so complete that the death of the editor usually meant the cessation of publication or the end of the influence of his periodical. This happened to the _Christian Messenger_ when Stone died, to the _Millennial Harbinger_ when Campbell died, and to the _American Christian Review_ when Benjamin Franklin died. It did not happen to the _Gospel Advocate_, the _Christian Standard_ or the _Christian-Evangelist_. These three became the nuclei of separate parties among the Disciples.

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[1] DeGroot, p. 180.

[2] Moore, p. 12.

To these editors, their periodicals were vital things. As Clark noted about the editors of secular papers, they regarded every issue as a son after an unbroken line of daughters.[3] It did not matter whether the issue was doctrinal or personal. Because the editors had a wide audience, they tended to play the role of judge, jury, and executioner when any real or imaginary heretic appeared on the scene. The case of Jesse B. Ferguson illustrates this. Such cases were multiplied many times in the pages of the leading periodicals.

Sometimes the offense was doctrinal, as was Ferguson's. An example of this is a case quoted by DeGroot. C. C.

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[3] Clark, p. 34.

Clingman wrote:

> For example, in 1918 this very scribe was thus editorially excommunicated, without the ghost of a heresy trial, from the anti-organ group for allowing himself to be the guest speaker in a pro-organ church, by an editor he had never met. Moreover, what that editor did was exactly what his readers expected him to do. To this good day, no one anywhere has ever dreamed of questioning his scriptural right to "hand me my hat." All he did was to write a lengthy editorial entitled "Gone Out from Among Us."[4]

Such was the power of the press.

Sometimes the issue was personal, yet this did not keep it from being spread out before the public. In 1879 Russell Errett, Jr., of the Christian Standard married a Roman Catholic. G. W. Rice, editor of the American Christian Review, was scandalized and proceeded to air Errett's private life for the benefit of his readers. Errett responded in kind, and the personal quarrel filled many columns of both periodicals. The Gospel Advocate ubiquitously entered the controversy, adding nothing of value, and the Apostolic Times piously informed its readers it intended to stay out of the battle.[5] The editors never shirked the responsibility of exercising their authority in a disciplinary manner toward individuals or toward groups, and they did it effectively.

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[4] C. C. Clingman, "Open Forum for Readers," Christian-Evangelist, April 30, 1936, p. 574. Quoted in DeGroot, p. 180.

[5] G. W. Rice, "The True Inwardness of the Case Concerning Personalities," American Christian Review, XXII (Oct., 1879), 348, 349.

One of the tragedies of the Disciples is that a movement which originated to unify Christendom has been unable to stay together itself. Today the general heritage is divided into three distinct bodies: Disciples of Christ, consisting of churches which co-operate in state and national organizations and are listed in the Yearbook of the Disciples; Independents, consisting of those churches which do not co-operate in the organizational life of the Disciples; and Churches of Christ, consisting of those churches refusing to use the organ in worship or to have fellowship with the other two groups. The interesting thing is that each of the three divisions has built around the nucleus of a periodical: the Christian-Evangelist for the Disciples; the Gospel Advocate for the Churches of Christ; and the Christian Standard for the Independents. Lacking the organizational machinery for division, the Disciples have found that periodicals can serve the purpose quite as well. Local church leaders (and these are the people who generally subscribe to a religious periodical) have long been divided into "Standard men," "Advocate men," and "Christian-Evangelist men," according to the periodical to which they subscribed. From the editors they have imbibed their likes and dislikes and passed them on in the local congregations.

The Church of Christ formally became a separate body in 1906. A list of preachers "loyal to the plea" was published by the McQuiddy Printing Company in 1906, making a division.[6] In reply to a letter from S. N. D. North, Director of the Census, David Lipscomb wrote in the same year:

> There is a distinct people taking the word of God as their only and sufficient rule of faith, calling their churches "churches of Christ" or "churches of God," distinct and separate. . . .[7]

DeGroot maintains that this schism came about on the basis of differences of conviction on the settled pastor, instrumental music in worship, and organized missionary societies.[8] All these issues were placed before the public in the periodicals, and the Churches of Christ were made up of those who agreed with the position maintained by the Gospel Advocate.

The separation between the Disciples and the Independents has not been so clear-cut and decisive, but it can be generally traced in the controversies found in the pages of the Standard and the Christian-Evangelist since 1900. The Standard has defined the position and served as the means of expression for the Independents. Stephen J. Corey does an excellent job of outlining this process in his Fifty Years of Attack and Controversy, the story of the editorial battles between the Standard and the Disciples favoring a co-operative organizational life.[9] This was answered from the viewpoint of the Standard in a pamphlet by Edwin V. Hayden.[10] The point remains, however, that over the years the Standard has served as the focal point and platform of expression for the Independent movement among the Disciples. As the Disciples have developed more and more ecclesiastical machinery and organization, the center of power has shifted from the periodicals to the state and national organizations. The Christian (successor to the Christian-Evangelist) reflects Disciples thought much more than it molds it. The real power and authority is in the leadership of the state associations and national agencies. So far this has not been true among the Independents, among whom the Standard still wields power, or among the Churches of Christ, where the Advocate remains an authoritative voice. Neither of these groups is yet organized to the degree of the Disciples, though they appear to be moving in that direction. The periodicals maintain power only in the absence of authoritative extra-congregational ecclesiastical machinery, the condition which gave them power among the Disciples in the first place.

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[6] DeGroot, p. 131.

[7] Quoted in DeGroot, p. 130.

[8] DeGroot, p. 95.

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[9] See Corey, "Introduction," pp. 1-13.

[10] Edwin V. Hayden, Fifty Years of Digression and Disturbance (Joplin, Missouri: Hunter Printing Co., n.d.). This work is not so complete nor as well done as Corey's.

The Disciples editors did not win every battle they fought. The editorial fraternity among the Disciples has been inclined, as a rule, toward conservatism. As the Disciples developed an increasing social awareness in common with their neighbors with the passing of the frontier, new practices crept into the church. In spite of the thunder of the Harbinger, the Review, and the Advocate, organs were introduced, and the settled pastorate with a salary for the pastor became an accepted thing. Both these practices were innovations in the sense of being new things among the Disciples, and both came as a result of social changes and practical experience on the local church level. There was scarcely a voice raised above the local church level on behalf of the organ, though some editors, especially Garrison and Isaac Errett, did speak out for the settled pastorate. Nevertheless these changes came, and the fulminations of the editors were largely ignored. Only the Advocate was able to carry its conservatism among the churches on these points, and it was appealing to a people in a different social milieu.

In terms of the relationship between the Disciples and the other denominations, J. H. Garrison and the Christian-Evangelist are due real credit for leadership in directing the movement toward co-operative endeavors. The opposition of the Advocate and the Standard to this recognition of the validity of the other denominations and their right even to exist is still reflected in the general refusal of the Independents and the Churches of Christ to participate in any kind of ecumenical encounter or program.

One is tempted to speculate on the effect it would have had on the development of the Disciples had the American Christian Publication Society succeeded in its goal of establishing a brotherhood-owned publishing house and an official organ in the form of a periodical in the 1850's. It might have unified the movement and prevented the subsequent divisions led by rival, privately-conducted, periodicals, each purporting to speak for the brotherhood. However, the establishment of the Christian Board of Publication in 1910 did not succeed in unifying the Disciple press. Unification of the press has only come about as the opposition groups have splintered off into orbits of their own led by their periodicals. The Standard refused to merge or to fold when the Christian-Evangelist became the brotherhood-owned periodical, in spite of the enticements which were offered. It might well have been that opposition papers would have sprung up as a result of the tension of the decades of change during and following the Civil War even had the Christian Age survived as a brotherhood-owned periodical. And if these hypothetical opposition papers had had as editors men who were highly respected personally, they would have succeeded.

The Disciples of Christ were not the only religious body to reflect the influence of the frontier in terms of the independent and individualistic approach to religion, nor can this approach always be ascribed to frontier influence alone. In the case of the Disciples, however, the environment was an element in fostering and sustaining an extremely independent and individualistic attitude.

There is no question but that the editors among the Disciples exercised a tremendous degree of power and authority in matters of doctrine and practice. The Disciples were by no means the only denomination to make extensive use of religious periodicals in the nineteenth century and though no study exactly comparable to this one has been made of editorial influence within the other denominations, editors have exercised some degree of influence by the very nature of their position.[11] Among the Disciples, however, this influence was a key factor in the development from 1850 to 1910 due to the complete absence of any form of extra-congregational authority. Other denominations used the congregational form of church government, but rarely in the extreme form to which the Disciples carried it. The Baptists, for example, in spite of their congregational form of government, allowed their local associations to exclude specific congregations. This study is not intended to imply that editorial influence is a unique condition among Disciples, but simply that it has been a key factor to the denomination's development.

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[11] For an annotated bibliography of the wide variety of denominational periodicals which appeared in one section of the country in the early part of the nineteenth century,

The Disciples editors served in a practical way as bishops in a movement that had no other extra-congregational authoritative body. The freedom of the press and the private initiative which the Disciples exercised provided the denomination with an open forum for a free-wheeling kind of discussion and an independent consideration of every conceivable issue. The press, at its best, was a mentally and spiritually liberating influence among the Disciples and, at its worst, an instrument for petty personal quarrels, vendettas, and doctrinal hair-splitting. For better and for worse the periodicals were an integral and leading part in the

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see Henry S. Stroupe, "The Religious Press in the South Atlantic States, 1802-1865," Historical Papers of the Trinity College Historical Society, Series XXXII. (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1956), pp. 3-165.

development of the Disciples from 1850 to 1910. Editorial leadership has been a key factor in bringing the denomination to its present stage of development, and a knowledge of the role played by the periodicals is essential for any understanding of the Disciples and the related groups which share the Disciples heritage.

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